

Hafa Adai!

NMC eyes breaking ground on student center this summer. **PAGE 3**
MVA, Finance reps fret over House version of retirees' bonus. **PAGE 4**

\$1

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'No to 5 House prosecutors'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) is standing his ground and will be exercising his constitutional authority as presiding officer by appointing a prosecutor in the impeachment trial of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry whether he will grant the request of House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) to appoint a team of five House members

as prosecutors, Hofschneider said yesterday that the Senate-adopted Impeachment Rules designates the Senate president to appoint a prosecutor.



Hofschneider

"I made that appointment already," he said.

When asked for clarification whether the Senate is not going to amend the Impeachment Rules, he again stated that the appointment of a

prosecutor has been made.

Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian), as then-Senate Committee on Impeachment

See **HOUSE** on **Page 4**

Defects ID'd in House Impeachment Record

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The Senate clerk has identified numerous deficiencies in the official House of Representatives Impeachment Record upon re-

view of the entire record.

Senate clerk Dolores S. Bermudes informed House clerk Linda B. Muna yesterday about the deficiencies that must be corrected.

The House Impeachment

Record was transmitted to the Office of the Senate clerk last March 24.

Bermudes said that pursuant to the Senate Impeachment Rule 9(e) (1), if the House Im-

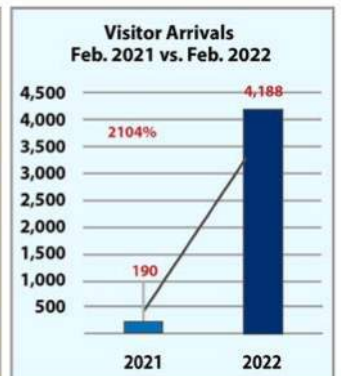
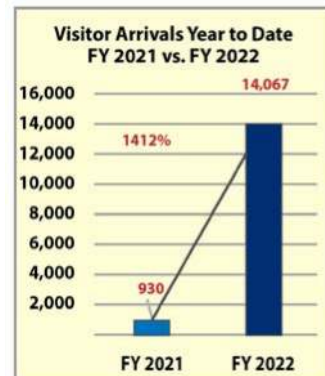
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Arrivals up 2104% in February

» Highest monthly arrivals since COVID pandemic

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota grew 2,104% to 4,188 visitors in February 2022, compared to 190 visitors received in February 2021.

While the figure is the highest monthly arrivals since the COVID-19 pandemic, it is still a significant decrease of 89% from 38,049 received in February 2019, indicating a continued challenging road



ahead for the recovery of the Marianas tourism economy.

A majority of visitors in February arrived under a travel bubble agreement with South Korea, the Marianas' largest source market prior to the

COVID-19 pandemic, with 2,821 visitors arriving. This compares to February 2021, when the Marianas received only two visitors from South Korea. Following a decline in
See **ARRIVALS** on **Page 4**

BONUS DEBACLE

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and other senators listen to the concerns raised by representatives of the Marianas Visitors Authority and Department of Finance during a meeting Friday over the House of Representatives' passage of legislation that would pave the way for the government retirees' \$1,000 bonus.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Story on
Page 4



Fuel prices drop across the CNMI

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

All three inhabited islands of the CNMI dropped their fuel prices over the weekend, just over a week since the last price hike.

Oil companies on Saipan took the lead last Friday, lowering its fuel prices by 15 cents, with Tinian's sole gas

See **FUEL** on **Page 4**



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

All three inhabited islands of the CNMI dropped their fuel prices over the weekend, just over a week since the last price hike.

INSIDE



LOCAL

The Rotary Club of Saipan will be hosting a "Community Egg-Stravaganza" on Saturday.

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WORLD

Bodies with bound hands and signs of torture lay scattered in a city on the outskirts of Kyiv.

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LIFE & STYLE

Jon Batiste had the most stunning victory of the night winning the top prize at the Grammys.

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Local

Rotary to host 'Easter Egg-stravaganza' this Saturday

The Rotary Club of Saipan will be hosting a "Community Egg-Stravaganza Easter Event" on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at the Sugar King Park in Garapan at 9am.

Joann Aquino, director of community service for the Rotary Club of Saipan, said during their weekly meeting last Tuesday that there will be four age groups for the egg hunting: infants (walking)/toddlers, ages 1 to 2 years old, preschool ages 3 to 5 years old, elementary ages 6 to 10 years old, and middle school

ages 11 to 13 years old.

She said the Rotary Club will hide approximately 3,000 plastic eggs filled with assorted toys, slime, candy, stuffed plush toys, books and various other prizes. In addition, each age group will have a gold, silver, bronze and rainbow egg.

After the egg hunting at the Sugar King Park, participants may proceed down to the NMI Museum grounds right across the street at around 12pm. There, participants will be given a free decorated Easter goody bag filled with snacks, claim their prizes, which entails cash awards with gift certificates, and other prize items. Additionally, there will be

one jumbo stuffed bear prize given to the family that collects the most eggs.

Participants will also be able to take a picture with the Rotary mascot Easter Bunny, enjoy the free bouncy house/slides, face painting/body tattoos, and support the small business vendors selling their products.

There will also be an egg decorating contest for high school students, grades 9-12.

The Rotary Club of Saipan held its first Community Easter Egg Hunt Event last year on April 9, 2021, despite the pandemic. "Our goal this year is to partner with various government agencies, private businesses and individuals to

accommodate more families and children," Aquino said.

"We will be glad to see you all in the Easter egg hunting,"

said Rotary Club president Ivan Ilmov.

Registration will be online at <https://forms.gle/KzK-fVDqYiznoc5PJ7>

fVDqYiznoc5PJ7

For more information, email rotaractclubofsaipan670@gmail.com. (Leigh Gases)

ON THE NET

Register: <https://forms.gle/KzKfVDqYiznoc5PJ7>



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rotary Club of Saipan officials have their picture taken with the Easter Bunny mascot.

Rainy weekend ahead likely

The public is being warned that heavy rainfall is possible over the upcoming weekend.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, a tropical disturbance, JTWC Invest 95W, is drifting toward the northwest, moving toward Yap over the next few days. Latest model guidance is in disagreement over the expected movement and intensity of this system, though all agree that it

will strengthen as it moves toward Yap and the Philippine sea, remaining south of Guam.

The GFS shows rainfall amounts across the Marianas as high as 10 to 12 inches, while the ECMWF shows very little rainfall, less than 1.5 inches. The GFS ensemble looks more realistic, showing amounts of 5 to 7 inches, with locally higher amounts possible.

Localized flooding is possible in low-lying and poor drainage areas, while flash flooding will be possible in

areas of heaviest rainfall, especially near steep terrain. Residents of the Marianas need to closely monitor this developing situation as watches, advisories and warnings could be issued later in the week. If living near streams and rivers, prepare to move items away from stream and river banks. Make sure storm drains nearby are not clogged, especially in low-lying areas. If planning anything outdoors this weekend, have a backup plan in place.

This outlook will be updated over the next couple of days. (PR)

Court grants release for man who allegedly beat girlfriend

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has granted the release of a man who was arrested last week for allegedly beating his girlfriend for waking him up.

During a bail modification hearing last Friday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho granted the release of Andrew Cabrera Duenas, 36, to his twin brother and third-party custodian after submitting a \$2,500 unsecured bond.

Duenas, who is facing charges of aggravated assault and battery, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace, allegedly beat his girlfriend for waking him up from his sleep in the early hours of March 31.

According to court documents, police responded to a domestic violence report at a store in Aftenas at around 2:59am on March 31. There, police met with the caller who had a swollen right eye and could barely open it, and what seemed to be a bruise around

the upper bridge of her nose and between her eyes. The caller also complained of pain on her left chest.

The victim told the police that she got up the evening of March 30 to get a sweater because she was felt cold and accidentally woke Duenas up. Duenas allegedly told her she did not have respect, called her names and then kicked her off the bed with both his feet. When she fell to the ground, the victim said she hit their boxed fan and was lying face-down on a laundry basket when Duenas picked her up, carried her, and slammed her onto the bed.

Duenas then allegedly punched her back with his right hand and, as she tried to get up, Duenas hit her face with his left hand.

The victim said she tried to calm Duenas down when he tried to punch her again by grabbing his hand. Duenas allegedly said, "You deserved it" and "You just drive me to the point of just hitting you."

She said Duenas then took his

phone and shone the flashlight in her face before telling her she had a "shiner," which means a darkened bruise on her eye, and even asked how did she get it when he didn't hit her face.

The victim, whose nose was bleeding at that point, said she got out of the bed to wash her face and when she returned, Duenas repeatedly apologized and told her, he did not mean to hurt her.

The victim said she replied, "But you did not hit me once; you hit me five times," which angered Duenas again. He then allegedly responded, "Because of your mouth," before punching her chest twice, then her upper stomach.

The victim said she later fell asleep but woke up after about an hour because she couldn't take the pain.

After checking on her children, she went to a nearby store where she called 911.

In an interview with Duenas, police said he denied hitting his girlfriend and claims he only kicked her.

NORTHERN MARIANAS PACIFIC MINI GAMES 2022

Rock the racket & get your A-game ON!

Badminton has not appeared on the Pacific Mini Games sports program before, so its inclusion in 2022 is something of a milestone. It has been on the main Pacific Games sports program in 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2019 with New Caledonia, Fiji and Tahiti sharing in the gold medal spoil over those years.

GAME IS ON! June 17 - 25, 2022

- Participating Countries: 11
- Competition Schedule: 20 - 25 Jun 2022
- Competition Venue: Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium
- Number of Athletes: 96

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

United Kingdom, European Union, Japan, Palau, Northern Mariana Islands, Serbia, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Micronesia, Federated States of, Samoa, and others.

www.northernmarianas2022.com

NMC eyes breaking ground on student center this summer

By LEIGH GASES

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REPORTER

Although there is no exact date yet, the Northern Marianas College is tentatively looking at breaking ground on a new student center—the first of many buildings that will be built at the As Terlaje campus—during the summer of this year, according to NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Ed.D., yesterday.

In an interview after the proclamation signing for Community College Month at the Board of Regents conference room, Deleon Guerrero said this groundbreaking will be the first phase of the seven-phase facilities master plan, which was prepared and designed by Taniguchi Ruth Makio Architects and Consultants. The facilities master plan was approved last year by the NMC Board of Regents and includes conceptual designs and proposed constructions of new classrooms, offices, and other learning facilities.

Deleon Guerrero added that along with the student center, there are also proposals for a new Cooperative Research, Extension & Education Services research building.

“Things are moving very quickly. Once we start, this As Terlaje site will be abuzz with activity,” said Deleon Guerrero. “Most of the [new] buildings, if not all of them, should be up in three to five years. That’s the goal.”

When asked about the Tinian and Rota campuses, Deleon Guerrero said they are part of the facility’s master plan. “We are not leaving them out. In fact, we’ve been working very closely with the Tinian leadership to see what’s next for the Tinian community with not just the cattle ranchers... but also additional agricultural growth and the military build-up there. And then on Rota, we’re trying to expand more programs there, so we’re go-

ing to have to also upgrade our facilities there.”

Saipan Tribune archives show that included in the plans is the development and expansion of Chalan Monsignor Road, spanning the portion of the road starting from the college and ending near the Iglesia ni Cristo Church. Additionally, in the long-term NMC has expressed interest in partnering with key public and private sector stakeholders to create a “college town” environment around NMC’s As Terlaje campus.

April is designated Community College Month



Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, center, is joined by House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), left, NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, second from left, NMC Board of Regents members Michelle L. Sablan, Irene T. Torres, and NMC Board of Regents chair Charles V. Cepeda, rightmost.

By LEIGH GASES

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REPORTER

April is Community College Month after Gov. Ralph Torres signed yesterday the proclamation at the As Terlaje campus of the Northern Marianas College, which joins colleges from all over the nation for a month full of activities to promote the value of higher education.

The proclamation, which was read to the crowd present and virtually over Zoom by representatives of the Associated Students of NMC, Project Proa Navigators, and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, says the occasion presents NMC with “a unique opportunity during college month to promote the value of higher education with prospective students, share our college and is addressing workforce development needs and demonstrate why public support of our Proa is important now more than ever.”

NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero said the occasion is an important way to celebrate and honor the contributions of community colleges. He credits NMC’s success to open admissions, stellar student support services, and ensuring fairness and equity for all students. Community colleges provide much lower tuition rates and much more in financial aid

and scholarships.

“Although NMC offers four-year degree programs, seven out of nine degree programs are associate’s degree programs, and 80% of our students are enrolled in associate’s degree programs,” Deleon Guerrero said. “Over the past five years, our associate’s degree programs have doubled their graduation rates.”

In Torres’ remarks after the proclamation signing, he said, “[NMC] will continue to play a vital role in increasing our U.S. workforce, growing our economy, and enhancing the quality of life for the people of the Marianas. I call upon the people of the Commonwealth to support our Proa Tribe as they continue to provide quality higher education for our community.” Proa is an indigenous term for “sailboat” and NMC often uses the term to refer to the college.

As part of a monthlong celebration, ASNMC will be hosting a “Egg Hunt” today, April 5.

On Wednesday, there will be the Student Employee Appreciation Breakfast in celebration of National Student Employment Week, followed by the “Mental Health & Wellbeing” Student Success Series. On Thursday, there will be the University of Alaska Fairbanks Info Ses-

sion. April 12 will be “College Night.”

April 18 and April 25 will be “Mentorship Monday.”

■ April 19, is “Paint Night.”

■ April 20: Showcasing the Strength of Everyone!—Special Education Concentration.

■ April 22: “Small Business Showcase,” with the

Small Business Development Center highlighting students and alumni entrepreneurs.

■ April 27: Student Town Hall.

■ April 29: Proa Promise Signing Day and 2nd Annual Research Symposium, followed by a Mentorship Activity.



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Office of Procurement

Guma' Hustisia, Imwal Aweewe, House of Justice

P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP 96950

Phone: (670) 236-9791 | Email: procurement@nmjudiciary.com

FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
Procurement Officer
APRIL 05, 2022

INVITATION FOR BIDS

NO. ITB-2022-JUD-10

VSS Bid No. 42200093

“ROOF TILE REMOVAL AND REPAIR SERVICES”

SUBMISSION DATE: May 05, 2022 (ChST)

SUBMIT VIA: THE CNMI GOVERNMENT'S

VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL

TIME: 10:00 A.M.

The Commonwealth Judicial Branch (“Judiciary”) is accepting bids for roof tile removal and repair services from qualified, individuals with experience.

In 2018, Super Typhoon Yutu made landfall on Saipan, damaging and ripping off portions of the Guma' Hustisia's roof tiles. The selected vendor shall remove and repair the roof in accordance with the specifications provided in this Invitation for Bids.

This project is funded by Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A copy of the Invitation for Bids is available on the CNMI Government's new Vendor portal, Vendor Self Service (“VSS”), at <https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/default.aspx>. The Invitation for Bids may also be retrieved online at www.nmjudiciary.gov. You must register on the VSS to participate in this ITB. For registration instructions, please follow the link: <https://www.finance.gov.mp/division-forms/oit/cnmi-vss-registration-instructions.pdf>.

A copy of the Invitation for Bids package specification and drawings are only available at the Cashier's Window, Door #5, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan between 8:00 am. to 3:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, Chamorro Standard Time (“ChST”), excluding observed holidays. The specifications and drawings will be provided via Universal Serial Bus (USB). **Bidders must bring their own USB device.**

The Judiciary reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or portions thereof, and waive immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the CNMI government.

The provisions of the NMI Judiciary Rules of Procurement Rule 69 prohibiting gratuities, kickbacks and contingent fees shall apply.

/s/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF JUSTICE/s/ FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
PROCUREMENT OFFICER

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MVA, Finance reps fret over House version of retirees' bonus

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Officials of the Marianas Visitors Authority and the Department of Finance met with senators Friday to express concerns over the House of Representatives' passage of their version of legislation that would pave the way for the government retirees' \$1,000 bonus.

Last Tuesday, March 29, the House did not act on the Senate's version of the legislation, Senate Joint Resolution 22-09, and instead, passed their other version, House Bill 22-95.

According to a press statement yesterday by Senate

President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), representatives of the MVA and Finance both expressed surprise upon realization that House Bill 22-95 makes cuts on funds that assist with the agencies' ability to carry out their core functions.

MVA said the reduction would impede MVA's office operations as well as its ability to host upcoming community events and beautification projects that are aimed to promote, preserve, and enhance the islands.

Finance also said the proposed re-appropriation of funds under House Bill 22-95 may also affect the department's

» Hofschneider says House should have sought an audience with MVA, Finance prior to passing their version of legislation

overall functionality and would lead to a great disadvantage within the Commonwealth.

Hofschneider said it is for these reasons that there is a great deal of dismay surrounding the passage of House Bill 22-95.

It has been suggested that any money taken from MVA or other agencies would be replenished using American Rescue Plan Act funds, but Hofschneider said this idea is

inconsistent with federal rules as there are certain restrictions on the use of ARPA funds. It was House vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) who earlier said that the \$850,000 they proposed to remove from MVA for the \$1,000 bonuses for government retirees will be backfilled or returned to MVA through the ARPA funding.

Hofschneider said yesterday that seeking an audience from

both MVA and Finance prior to moving on such a critical piece of legislation would have been the least wise action to have taken.

"However, I, along with the leadership of the Senate, is determined to find the source of funds without jeopardizing an industry known in the CNMI for the last 40 years, and ensure the retirees get their bonus soon," Hofschneider said, adding that it has always been the Senate's intent to support government retirees.

He noted that the Senate passed Senate Joint Resolution 22-05 on Dec. 15, 2021, and Senate Joint Resolution 22-09 on March 10, 2022, both pro-

posing to pave the way for the bonuses. He said these Senate actions were made to ultimately assist the retirees. SJR 22-09 approves Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' request to create a new program and business unit for the government retirees' \$1,000 bonuses.

However, the House countered the Senate's intent by not acting on Senate Joint Resolution 22-09. Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), said the Senate joint resolution created a business unit for the bonuses, but with zero funding.

ARRIVALS

From Page 1

demand from South Korea in December and early January due to the omicron variant and other factors, weekly flights doubled from 12 weekly flights in January to 24 weekly flights in February. Air Busan also started flying to the Marianas for the first time in January. Arrivals are anticipated to continue to increase with the expansion of flight service over the coming months. As of March 21, all inbound passengers to Korea are no longer required to quarantine, which is expected to further drive travel demand.

The Marianas also received 842 visitors from the United States, 382 visitors from Guam, and a combined 143 additional visitors from all other destinations in February. (PR)

HOUSE

From Page 1

Hearing chair, first appointed Villagomez to serve as House impeachment prosecutor but Villagomez declined. This prompted King-Nabors to send House vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) a notice to file an appearance as the House impeachment prosecutor, considering that Attao served as chairman of the House Special Impeachment Committee. Attao also declined.

Hofschneider, as presiding officer of the impeachment trial, then appointed Rep. Corina L. Magofna (D-Saipan) last week to serve as House impeachment prosecutor. Magofna declined.

Villagomez then filed last Wednesday a notice of appearance for Reps. Magofna, Attao, Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), and Leila Staffler (D-Saipan) to serve as one team to prosecute Torres in his impeachment hearing in the Senate.

Magofna stated that the House stands ready to prosecute Torres and that they have been preparing as a unit to prosecute the impeachment together.

Biden's bipartisan infrastructure law invests in US territories

HONOLULU—This week in Hawai'i, Department of the Interior leadership convened a workshop with federal partners and teams from several of the U.S. Territories—American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—to discuss strategies to support the successful implementation of projects supported by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the U.S. Territories.

The three-day workshop covered key infrastructure

topics, including water, broadband, energy, legacy pollution, and built and natural infrastructure needs. Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator Winnie Stachelberg and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa helped lead the events, which further explored Territorial infrastructure needs and identified ways to work together to deliver significant climate and infrastructure support provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Throughout the workshop,

Department leadership highlighted ongoing efforts to ensure efficient disbursement of infrastructure funding to U.S. Territories, including for the WaterSMART grant and Ecosystem Restoration programs. These efforts will help ensure U.S. Territories have the investments they need to develop a long-term plan to facilitate conservation, resiliency, and economic growth.

In an effort to further support the Territories, Senior Advisor Stachelberg announced the Department's intention to designate a Territorial carve-

out targeted to ecosystem restoration infrastructure needs. In addition, Deputy Assistant Secretary Nakoa also announced that the grant application deadline for Technical Assistance Program activities, including general Technical Assistance, Maintenance Assistance, and Coral Reef and Natural Resources, will be extended an additional two weeks, to April 15, 2022.

During the visit, Infrastructure Coordinator Stachelberg also met with Native Hawaiian Community leaders from Native Hawaiian-serving

agencies and organizations to similarly explore their infrastructure needs and ways to access significant climate and infrastructure support provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. She and city and state representatives specifically explored how the Department can continue to support the infrastructure needs for the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act's homesteading program.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

FUEL

From Page 1

station following suit on Saturday. Rota joined the trend last, lowering its fuel prices yesterday morning.

Mobil Oil Marianas took the lead early Friday morning, lowering its prices from \$6.01 to \$5.86 per gallon of their regular fuel. Mobil also reduced its Supreme fuel from \$6.46 a gallon to \$6.31.

The local oil company also brought its diesel prices back down from \$6.63 to \$6.48 per gallon.

Shell Marianas followed Mobil's lead later that evening.

Meanwhile, Tinian also lowered its fuel prices by 15 cents starting April 2. Tinian's regular fuel went down from \$7.75 per gallon to \$7.60, while diesel went down from \$8.35 to \$8.11.

As for Rota, a gallon of regu-

lar fuel dropped from \$7.49 to \$7.34 while diesel dropped from \$10.17 per gallon to \$10.02.

Local motorists were enthusiastic about fuel dropping below the \$6 mark again.

"I was so excited to fill up my gas tank when I saw gas went back down to \$5.86. It's crazy how last year, I would've thought that that was excessive but after gas nearly reaching \$6.10, I appreciate this price," said a

19-year-old student.

Meanwhile, a 47-year-old woman said she never realized how a few cents could impact her bi-weekly fuel budget.

"I usually set aside \$50 for a full tank of gas because I used to be able to fill up my tank with a little over \$48. When gas went up to \$6, my \$50 only reached a little over half the tank. I never realized how much a few cents could impact fuel costs. Now that

its back at \$5.86, I can fill my tank with exactly \$50 and I'm happy with that," she said.

The entire nation continues to see a steady increase in fuel prices as the international conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues.

According to international media outlets, the cost of fuel in the U.S. mainland has also reached an all-time high, with several states surpassing the \$5 mark.

DEFECTS

From Page 1

peachment Record transmitted to the Senate clerk is not in compliance with these rules, the Senate clerk shall promptly notify the House clerk and allow 48 hours for the House clerk to correct the identified deficiencies.

Bermudes said that, pursuant to Senate Impeachment Rule 9(a), the House Impeachment Record shall be consecutively paginated, contain a table of contents identifying the page on which part begins, and be organized in, first, by Article of Impeachment, and second, by chronological order.

She said Senate Impeachment Rule 9(b) further states that the House proceedings are required to be included in the House Impeachment Record

and shall be transcribed.

On table of contents, Bermudes said House proceedings on House Resolution 22-14 lacks a Bates stamp table. Bates numbering is typically used in the legal, medical, and business fields.

House Resolution 22-14, which was introduced by Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), impeached Torres for alleged commission of felonies, corruption, and neglect of duty, in violation of Article 3, Section 19 of the CNMI Constitution.

Bermudes said the Articles of Impeachment are organized in chronological order but the Bates stamp numbers for the Articles are not in chronological order.

The Senate clerk said the House's Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee hearing does not have a

Bates stamp table.

On House proceedings on House Resolution No. 22-14 that lacks a Bates stamp, Bermudes said the documents are not organized in chronological order, and the Bates numbers are not consistent and consecutive because first number is 007836 instead of 000001.

On six Articles of Impeachment, the Senate clerk found that Bates stamp numbers are not organized in chronological and consecutive order.

She said there are identified typographical and spelling errors on the Bates stamp table.

However, Bermudes said, there may be other typographical errors that may not have been identified.

She said some supporting documents, including Travel Authorization numbers on the Bates stamp table and TA numbers supporting docu-

ments do not match.

The Senate clerk found that supporting documents are not listed on the Bates stamp table and are not organized in chronological order by dates.

Pertaining to the Office of the Public Auditor report on CNMI Government Travel Policy, Bermudes said this document is a stand-alone document that requires clarification as to which Article(s) of Impeachment it refers to.

She said if this OPA report is to be used for more than one Article of Impeachment, then at a minimum, identify the Articles it references and the relevant page(s) of the report.

On the 21st House Minority Report on Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' expenditures Jan. 6, 2021, Bermudes said this document is a stand-alone document that requires clarification as to which Article(s) it refers

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHEF RETURNS TO HIS ROOTS

Conno Pierce is named executive chef of Triple J restaurants

Triple J announced yesterday the recent hiring of Richard "Conno" Pierce as the executive chef of the Triple J Restaurant Group in the CNMI. Pierce will assume leadership duties of Triple J's restaurant, hotel and commercial kitchen operations and help lead the restaurant group in a new direction.

With more than 15 years in the industry, in almost every position possible within a back of house setting, to include mass meal preparation/catering services, Pierce is eager to put his culinary development background into play here back home in the CNMI.

Coming back home was always in the cards for Pierce, who left Saipan when he was 15 to follow in his mother, Marian Aldan-Pierce's, footsteps. From Hawaii, to Washington, to Minnesota, he's always had this idea of coming back home to be with family, bringing his knowledge and passion back to the islands. His hope is to instill today's industry standards in co-workers and employees with the hope that they will obtain his same enthusiasm, work ethic and love for the profession of being a true culinarian as he has.

With quite an impressive portfolio, having worked alongside Michelin star chefs from The French Laundry in Napa Valley (Calif.), SingleThread in Healdsburg (Calif.), and Alinea in Chicago (Illinois), Pierce has worked closely with celebrity chef Justin Sutherland during his time with Madison Restaurant Group as executive chef/culinary director and, most recently as sous chef for the Hitchcock Restaurant Group, working directly under two-time James Beard-winning chef, Brendon McGill.

Pierce is excited to bring that Michelin-star cooking style to Saipan. "Many people aren't familiar with the Michelin-star system. My hope is to change the mindset that it is pompous and picky, and more about the quality of the ingredients, the harmony of flavors, the mastery of techniques and the personality of the team and the chef as expressed in the cuisine, and consistency both over time and across the entire menu," he said.

Pierce also emphasized the importance of farm-to-table, using local produce and availability right here at home. While he was quite impressed with Triple J's strategically designed commercial kitchen and efficiencies, he also looks forward to introducing new equipment, cooking techniques and flavors Saipan hasn't seen before. "I am not

trying to re-invent the wheel, just make it better—play up dishes differently, refocus and revamp because there is always opportunity for new things."

Pierce is an all-around team player, and his portfolio says as much, from kitchen supervisor, sous chef, executive sous chef, to lead trainer. His desire is to be everywhere within the group, teaching everyone along the way, getting into the trenches and passing on better practices and efficiencies as he goes and grows.

Pierce's return to Saipan was one of excitement, so much so that he was receiving calls while in quarantine, with friends wondering if he'd open up his own restaurant, so when asked why he joined the Triple J Group, Pierce stated, "My mother has always been close with Bob Jones and the family. Growing up

I had my immediate and extended family, but I also had my DFS and Triple J family, I've lived life with them, both personally and professionally, and while I've never worked in a corporate setting, it was appealing to me—seeing Bob and the Jones family build the company from the ground up, it only made sense for me to work for them."

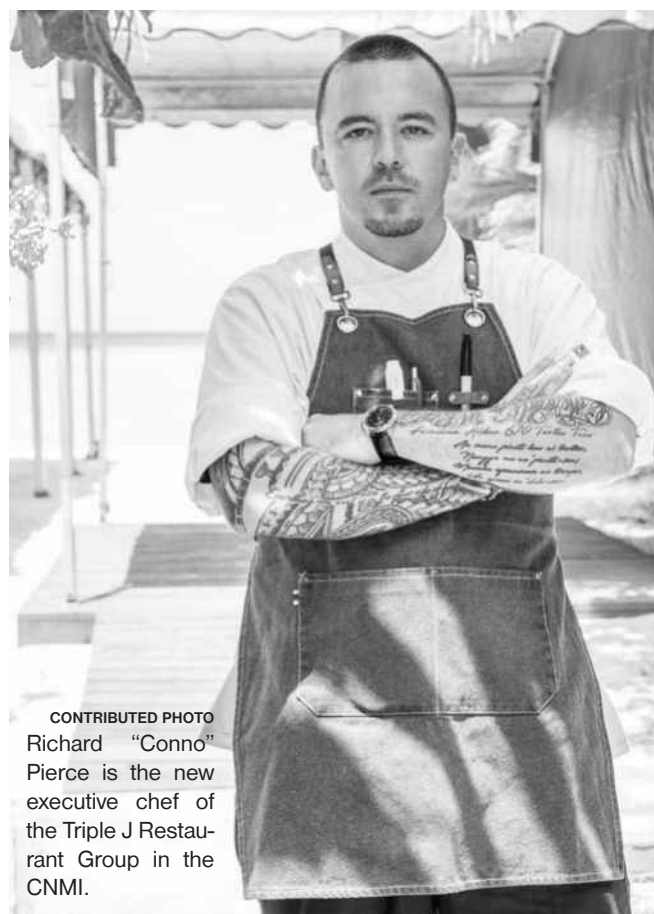
He says it is an exciting time to join the group. "COVID was horrible for the restaurant industry, people leaving the industry and switching fields, and now since everyone is picking themselves up out of that, the opportunity for growth and possibilities within Triple J are endless and I want to be involved with a group that has a solid foundation and image."

The feeling is mutual, Triple J's chairman and CEO, Robert "Bob" Jones, said "While Chef Conno exhibits the rare traits

of being formally trained in culinary arts and the ability to lead, develop and grow businesses, what makes him the best chef for our group has more to do with his passion for leading people and creating a culture within the industry here in the CNMI."

Jeff Jones, president and COO, added, "Our business philosophy has always been 'Customers First' focused, and we look forward to Chef Conno leading our kitchens by example and investing in the people in a way that will inspire us all."

The community is invited to get a glimpse of Chef Conno in action as he leads cooking demos in-store at Payless SuperFresh this Saturday, April 9, and next Saturday, April 16. Sample his unique farm-to-table style, using local produce, free of charge while supplies last. Stay tuned for future demos hosted by Chef Conno every month at various locations on island. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Richard "Conno" Pierce is the new executive chef of the Triple J Restaurant Group in the CNMI.

Saipan Tribune

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A wealth of information at 3rd annual literacy fair at JKPL

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The 3rd Annual Community Mobile Information Literacy Fair last Saturday, which signaled the start of “National Library Week” from April 3 to April 9, drew about 250 parents and children of all ages to the JKPL parking lot, which featured several informational booths and some demonstrations.

This fair invited community partners who have mobile units to share about their

special programs and services. Community members were welcome to walk around and learn about the special services of each. The Department of Public Safety Car Seat Program demonstrated how to properly install car seats, while the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services did a demonstration on how they put on their gear during fires. A trained dog from the CNMI Division of Customs and Biosecurity demonstrated how they sniff out packages for contraband.

The fair was missed for two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic and this was the first fair since then. Erlinda Naputi, library director said in an interview during the fair, “We’re back and we are actually happy. We’re glad our partners are here and we’re happy to see all these community members come out to support and take advantage of this literacy fair.”

When asked how the library use and turn-out is going, Naputi said it had been slow going because of the pandemic.

“From the beginning of the pandemic to last month, it was really slow. But three Saturdays ago, we saw about over 100 some people in the library; Saturday is one of our busiest days. That’s actually a good indication that the people are a lot more comfortable to come out to enjoy freedom again. ... That’s another reason why we wanted to bring this mobile information literacy fair back because it’s outdoors.”

Leora Terlaje, Bookmobile supervisor, hopes the fair had a great impact on participants

because “there’s a lot of important information here in regards to emergencies. ... So that’s very important for the children and the adults to know who are all out there.”

Naputi dedicated this year’s fair “to our library team, because they actually worked so hard to put this together. It’s a very successful turnout, we have so many people here.” She also thanked the sponsors, donors, and “of course most importantly, our community members that are here today. And, of course, a shoutout to

all our partners or collaborating partners that are here. I’d like to thank them for their continued support not only of the library but of the community. It’s great. Thank you so much.”

In attendance at the fair were first lady Diann Torres and family. Among the government and non-government agencies present were CNMI Priority Care, Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority, Department of Youth Services, and Northern Marianas College Nursing Club, and several others.



LEIGH GASES

Joeten-Kiyu Public Library staff, including library director Erlinda Naputi, front left and Leora Terlaje, right, are kept busy during the 3rd Annual Community Mobile Information Literacy Fair last Saturday at the JKPL parking lot.



LEIGH GASES

A Customs K-9 unit officer with his dog and children volunteers demonstrate how the dog detects drugs in packages.



LEIGH GASES

Priority Care staff shows a parent and child the inside of its ambulance.



LEIGH GASES

A Department of Public Works staff shows a guest the inside of a backhoe.



LEIGH GASES

Children and their mom check out the inside of one of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's mobiles.



LEIGH GASES

A Commonwealth Utilities Corp. power division staff explains how a power meter works to participants.



LEIGH GASES

A Department of Public Safety car seat program staff demonstrates the proper way to install a car seat.



LEIGH GASES

The American Red Cross-NMI Chapter booth at the 3rd Annual Community Mobile Information Literacy Fair last Saturday at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library parking lot.

'Biden's 2023 budget eyes \$30.7M for Marianas NAP, \$27.25M for PSS'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

President Joe Biden sent to Congress Monday the fiscal year 2023 budget that includes, among other fundings, \$30.7 million for the Marianas Nutrition Assistance Program, and \$27.25 million for the CNMI Public School System, or more than double this year's budget, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan said in his e-kilili newsletter that, with the increase to \$30 million Congress included in the fiscal year 2022 appropriation—and Biden's recommendation to increase further, the CNMI will now able to provide food aid or food stamp on par with the national Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

NAP funding was just \$10.6 million annually when Sablan was first elected to Congress in 2008, becoming the first delegate to the U.S.

House of Representatives from the CNMI.

On school funding, the delegate said Biden's recommendation would bring an estimated \$27.25 million to PSS, an increase of \$14.99 million over this year.

He said the president proposed an increase in federal support for elementary and secondary schools similar to what the House wanted for fiscal year 2022, but the Senate cut back.

Sablan said other highlights of Biden's budget is the \$191 million for the Tinian divert airfield. He said the president recommends continuing to invest in the development of the Tinian divert airfield—\$58 million for airfield development phase 1, \$92 million for fuel tanks with pipeline and hydrant system, and \$41 million for parking apron.

On the Pell grant, Sablan said Congress increased the



Sablan

maximum grant for college student tuition assistance by \$400 in fiscal year 2022. He said Biden now proposes again raising that aid, which goes to some 900 Marianas college students, by another \$1,775. The delegate said the maximum Pell grant would then be \$8,670.

On insular water and sewer, Sablan said the House would have permanently established a 1.5% set-aside for water and sewer infrastructure for the Marianas and other insular areas in the INVEST Act that they passed last year.

"But the Senate had other ideas. That means we must continue to put the set-aside in each year's appropriation legislation," he said.

Sablan said Biden agreed in his budget to support funding at that level, which has brought over \$109 million 24-hour water to the Marianas.

To lower power costs, the

delegate said the Biden administration will continue to push for increased funding to reduce

reliance on imported fossil fuels and lower the cost of electricity in the Marianas and other insular areas.

He said last year the House approved \$15.5 million for the Department of the Interior's Energizing Insular Communities program, although the Senate cut that back to \$11 million in the final fiscal year 2022 bill. Sablan said Biden's recommendation for fiscal year 2023 is again \$15.5 million.

He said Interior Department funding for the Coral Reef Initiative and compact impact compensation would also increase.

On Medicaid, Sablan said although the Marianas is receiving \$64.01 million in federal Medicaid assistance this year and the local cost share is set at 17%—lower than all but one U.S. state—their ultimate goal remains full inclusion in the Medicaid program with no limit on funding and a local cost share based on the number of people in the Mari-

anas below the federal poverty level. Sablan said Biden supports that goal in his fiscal year 2023 budget proposal.

The \$64.01 million in federal Medicaid assistance is 10 times more than when Sablan first came to Congress.

The delegate said Biden's budget proposal gives them a good basis for setting funding for fiscal year 2023 at levels that will benefit the people of the Marianas.

"The hard work now begins to get the President's recommendations passed by the House and the Senate," Sablan said.

» \$191M for Tinian Divert Airfield project

Paradise Dental is latest ProaPerks Partner



NMC

Paradise Dental is now a proud NMC ProaPerks partner. More information about their special promotion for ProaPerks card holders can be found at marianas.edu/proaperks.

Paradise Dental is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks Partner, joining many other businesses and organizations that provides exclusive discounts and benefits for Northern Marianas College students, employees, and alumni.

All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive a 10% discount at Paradise Dental.

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students, and employees. For more information, visit marianas.edu/proaperks

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include NMC alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. (PR)



Manuel



Seman

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

Thank you to Hopwood Middle School librarian Janet Sablan for your guidance and support, as the nation marks National Library Week (April 3-9) to celebrate our nation's libraries, library workers' contributions and to promote library use and support. The theme this year is "Connect with Your Library."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

VICE PRINCIPAL'S WEEK

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gratitude is extended to Hopwood Middle School vice principals Karen Manuel and Ben Seman, who are being honored this week as part of the celebration of National Vice Principal's Week (April 4-8), when school systems nationwide recognize vice principals who have demonstrated unwavering leadership—becoming a source of strength and inspiration for us all. Thanks to Manuel and Seman for their dedication, leadership, and contributions to our school.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Earhart, LLC

Suite 208, DHL Building, Middle Road
P.O. Box 505979 CK Saipan, MP 96950

Accountant

Job Duties:

Prepare, review, and analyze financial statements or other accounting records for accuracy, completeness, consistency and compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and other standard accounting procedures. Maintain an accurate and complete recording of receipts, disbursements, income, and expenses utilizing the company's accounting software. Calculate taxes owed. Prepare monthly, quarterly, and annual tax returns, including but not limited to, monthly business gross receipts tax, estimated tax, employer's quarterly withholding tax, 941-SS employer's quarterly federal tax, W-2 wage and tax statement, W-3SS transmittal of wage and tax statements, annual reconciliation of withholding taxes withheld, corporate income tax, ensuring adherence to requirements for payment, filing, and reporting with the federal and local tax government agencies. Prepare checklist for new clients and review accounting engagement tasks. Review billable and non-billable expenses including adjustments to ensure that the coding of billing and expenses are accurate within established practices. Prepare and analyze client's billing and respond to inquiries regarding billing issues and problems. Review check requisitions ensuring validity of transactions, proper authorization and supporting documentation and general ledger coding consistent with company's prescribed policies and procedures for financial operations. Review and calculate employees time record. Maintain and administer payroll data. Provide analytical review of income and operating expenditures by performing periodic reconciliation of accounts. Prepare ad hoc reports and analysis as requested by the management. Perform other duties as required and assigned.

Location of Employment: Saipan

Applicants for this position must have a Bachelor's Degree in Accountancy with 60 months work experience as an Accountant. Interested applicants should send their application and resume to the employer (by mail: P.O. Box 505979 CK Saipan, MP 96950; by email: Where_Is_Amelia@hotmail.com).



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

RE-ANNOUNCEMENT REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ) NMHC RFQ 2022-001

(This ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

INDEPENDENT COST ESTIMATOR (ICE) CONTRACTOR

Information regarding the ICE contractor services will be available online on April 05, 2022, you may obtain the RFQ information by visiting the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab", or at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com. All price quotations shall be submitted on or before May 06, 2022, no later than end of work day.

Pursuant to NMIAC § 100-60-220 (c)(1), the NMHC is soliciting price quotation from qualified firms to perform ICE for the NMHC's CDBG-DR programs.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

All price quote submissions in response to this RFQ are considered quotes and not proposals or offers, even, if labeled as such. The quoters agree to and are bound by all instructions, procedures and rules of the RFQ.

Inquiries regarding this solicitation must be addressed in writing to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager / Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ Zenie P. Mafnas
Acting-Corporate Director



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY INVITATION TO BID

GARAPAN AREA TRASH COLLECTION SERVICE MVA-ITB-22-2044

Submission/Closing Date:
Submit sealed proposal to:

April 22, 2022 Time: 3:00PM (ChST)

Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building, Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the ITB package on or after March 23, 2022 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, from 8:00AM-12:00PM and 1:00PM-5:00PM (ChST), Monday through Friday, except holidays. ITB package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference "MVA-ITB-22-2044" on the subject line to Imaratita@mymarianas.com

/s/ Ellsbeth Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The products Americans buy can help fund seditionists and war criminals

In the nearly 15 months since the Capitol insurrection, some major corporations have backtracked significantly on their pledge to deny campaign funding to the 147 members of Congress who voted against certification of the 2020 presidential election result. Just to be clear: 147 members of Congress deliberately sought to undermine American democracy and subvert a legitimate presidential election to advance then-President Donald Trump's lie that the election was stolen.

Those members deserved pariah status back then, and they still deserve it today. But some corporations that jumped on the bandwagon of national outrage after the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection have apparently had second thoughts. Maybe subverting democracy wasn't such a bad thing after all. Or maybe advancing their corporate interests (translation: greed) is more important than maintaining a principled stand.

The same holds true for major corporations still doing business in Russia despite that country's war crimes and wanton destruction in Ukraine. Hundreds of companies answered the call to shut down their operations in Russia to make dictator Vladimir Putin rethink his invasion. But for others? Meh.

The corporations most deserving of exposure for their greed are those that have opted both to fund democracy-subverting members of Congress and to continue doing business in Russia. Top on the list is Koch Industries, whose motto is "Creating value. Transforming life." Ten million displaced Ukrainians can certainly attest to how their lives have been transformed. Koch subsidiary Georgia Pacific, maker of household products that Americans encounter up and down their local supermarket aisles, asserts an "enduring partnership" in the promotion of human and civil rights. That will no doubt be reassuring to the journalists and dissidents poisoned, imprisoned, exiled or assassinated for having challenged Putin.

Back home, Koch joins Boeing, American Crystal Sugar, General Dynamics and Valero Energy among the top corporate donors to congressional seditionists, according to the watchdog group Citizens for Ethics. Koch leads the way in the number of seditionist federal lawmakers who have received donations. Koch wasn't among the corporations that signed onto condemnation statements after the Capitol Insurrection, but Valero joined Ford Motor Co. and Aflac in pledging a pause and a reevaluation of their campaign donation policies. They apparently reevaluated in favor of looking the other way and resuming donations either directly to candidates or through their Republican congressional campaign committees.

After the 2020 presidential election, various state leg-

See **AMERICANS** on Next Page



Putin obsessed with reversing history

Earlier this month, Mikhail Gorbachev celebrated his 91st birthday in obscurity at his home near Moscow, the forgotten leader of Russia's brief, unsuccessful move toward democracy at home and on its borders.

It's been more than three decades since Gorbachev presided over the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the liberation of its satellite nations. One of democracy's greatest modern triumphs, Vladimir Putin called it "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the (20th) century."

Recognizing its economic weaknesses, Gorbachev acquiesced in the Soviet empire's peaceful breakup. He refused to intervene as the nations on its western and southern flanks re-embraced democracy and renounced their Cold War-era ties.

That's the history Putin wants to reverse with his brutal, unprovoked attempt to subjugate Ukraine—one of the onetime Soviet republics that joined Eastern European nations in declaring independence.

The outcome remains in doubt, but the war has clearly not gone as Putin expected. The vaunted Russian military has met the fierce resistance of a people fighting for their homeland like the Russians themselves resisted the Nazi Wehrmacht in World War II, a history Putin knows well since his parents lived through the 28-month siege of Leningrad.

Putin's invasion raises the question of whether, in the 21st century, the power of the sword can prove mightier than the power of ideas, whether it is ultimately sustainable for an autocrat wielding military force to quash the natural yearning by peoples seeking freedom to live their lives and choose their leaders.

Russia and the West are not only engaged in a military and geopolitical battle, but one between the autocratic heritage of one and the democratic traditions of the other. Ukraine has made clear which side it prefers.

The brief Gorbachev era – and the presidency of his successor Boris Yeltsin – serve as a reminder that Russia did not have to wind up this way. But decades of political and economic corruption, and its lack of a democratic tradition, helped Putin undercut the era that Gorbachev defined by the words "perestroika" (restructuring) and "glasnost" (openness).

By **CARL P. LEUBSDORF**

The Dallas Morning News

Carl P. Leubsdorf is the former Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. Readers may write to him via email at: carl.p.leubsdorf@gmail.com.



That internal conflict was vividly captured recently by veteran CNN correspondent Nic Robertson. "The world was changing, the Cold War thawing, new horizons beckoning, and a generation of Russians was about to taste the freedoms they craved," he wrote, recalling the halcyon days of Gorbachev's 1990 Moscow.

Even after Yeltsin, impatient with the pace of reform, forced Gorbachev from power less than two years later, life in the Russia capital continued that course, Robertson said. "Nights in Moscow were wild with revelers dancing in – and often on – the bars."

I visited Russia twice during those years, once as a journalist, once as a tourist, and the lively centers of both St. Petersburg and Moscow had come to resemble Western European cities more than the gray, humorless society I first encountered in 1959.

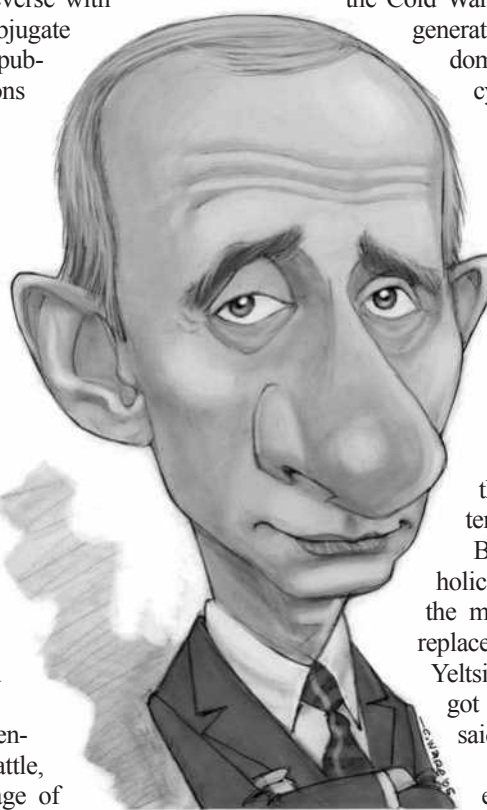
But as the 21st century loomed, Yeltsin, alcoholic and unreliable, "plucked Putin from among the money-corrupted milieu in the Kremlin to replace him as Russian president – and, in return, Yeltsin, who had battled corruption allegations, got immunity from prosecution," Robertson said.

Initially, "there was a glimmer of the modernizer about Russia's new leader, but that reputation didn't last long," he said. Despite Russia's growing acceptance by the

West, Putin remained obsessed by Russia's diminished global role.

In time, the true Putin emerged, the onetime secret police operative who was more the heir of Ivan the Terrible and Joseph Stalin than of Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. (East-

See **PUTIN** on Next Page



EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

It's the inflation, stupid

Joe Biden is engaged in the most extensive test of whether an American president can survive elevated levels of inflation since Jimmy Carter, and it's not going well.

The latest NBC News poll has Biden at a dismal 40% approval rating that, if it doesn't change, will end the careers of Democrats up and down the ballot in November's midterm elections.

According to the poll, only a third of people approve of Biden's handling of the economy, a low that most presidents have needed a recession to hit. This number has sunk steadily—along with Biden's overall standing—from 52% in April of last year.

Inflation, which increased 7.9% from February 2021 to February 2022, is top of mind for voters. In the survey, 35% of people said cost of living is the first or second most important issue to the country. Climate change, in contrast, is at 17% and the pandemic at 8%. Given the choice, 68% would rather see Biden make reducing inflation and improving the economy his top priority, not the war in Ukraine.

Elevated inflation represents a trifecta of doom for incumbent presidents.

Does it impact the lives of people in a discernible way that they will notice no matter what the president says or the media covers? Yes.

Does it cut the pay of workers unless there are steep increases in wages? Yes.

Does it make the president seem powerless to control events? Yes.

It was a common question in the media a while ago why people felt badly about a good economy? Paul Krugman wrote column last year headlined, "The Making of a Feel-Bad Boom." The question, though, was miscast. An economy where wages are effectively falling is not a good economy, at least it isn't going to be felt by most people as such.

Even though wages grew by a robust 5.1% year-over-year this February, that wasn't enough to keep up with rising prices. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, real average hourly earnings declined 2.6% from February 2021-2022. During that 12-month period, the month-to-month change in real hourly wages was only positive in two months.

This is presumably why the NBC poll found that 62% say that their family income is falling behind, 31% say that it is staying about even, and just 6% believe it is going up faster.

Biden could combine the political talents of FDR and Reagan, the oratorical skills of Lincoln and JFK, and the common touch of Jackson and Truman, and this sense of falling behind would still be eating away at the foundations of his presidency.

Biden's default has been to reassure the public that inflation is only transitory, to place it in the context of global supply chain issues beyond the control of any one person, and to blame various malefactors, whether meat companies or Vladimir Putin, for surging prices. But the buck still stops with the president, even if the dollar has less purchasing power than it

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.



Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

did a year ago.

Biden hasn't resorted to anything as readily mockable as President Gerald Ford's "Whip Inflation Now," or WIN buttons in 1974, but is flailing around nearly as badly (inflation did, by the way, drop steeply from 1974 to 1976, but it took a recession to achieve this momentary gain).

He's mostly trying to rebrand spending initiatives he already supported as steps toward curbing costs. Regardless, the Federal Reserve has a huge role and, so far, it, like the administration, has been slow to catch up to the new inflationary reality.

The American public has had no such luxury. For it, increased prices are a daily lived reality, and no amount of spin is going to change that. Unless conditions markedly improve soon, Biden's experiment is going to end very badly for him and his party.

Drummer Taylor Hawkins' death reveals the vulnerability we all share

After having my son almost 19 years ago, I pretty much checked out of pop culture in favor of being a full-time mother. So when I heard of drummer Taylor Hawkins' death, I wasn't hit hard the way so many of my friends and fellow musicians had been. What did bother me were the headlines that told us "10 different substances" had been found in his body. The implication was tawdry and disrespectful; it was sensationalistic language that didn't demand a back story. It basically left readers with the takeaway that this was just another sad and perhaps unremarkable casualty of rock 'n' roll. Who needed to read further? Not having any previous sentiment for the man, I was surprised at how offended I was by these cheap headlines. There had to be more to the story.

Indeed, there was.

I read the Rolling Stone interview with Hawkins from last June. Despite his expletive-rich responses, he revealed himself to be soft and vulnerable on the inside. I recognized in Hawkins an aspect of myself. I saw this tender fallibility in many of my friends, too. This man was simply trying to do his job, just trying to get through. Imagine a musician playing huge arenas who must fight his fear to even be on that stage! There's no place to hide. All he can do is power through it. Or medicate through it. A human does what he or she must, simply in order to get through.

It's so easy to be star-struck. I've met a number of famous people, some who inspired me to offer up inane fan banter and some who later became known to me in human and intimate ways.

You can feel their energy, their focus and perhaps you sense that they are existing in another sort of world. But at the same time, one must always remember that people of elevated visibility are not gods or goddesses. They are humans. And they are also just doing their best to get through.

My father was a harpsichordist of some note. His esteemed career took him to many stages in many countries. As a child, I would see him as two men: the fellow who shuffled around the house in his slippers and bathrobe, doting on his beloved cats, and that other man, the one who wore a white bow tie, tux and tails, who warmly received us backstage, the gentleman who greeted fellow musicians in French or German.

When I visited people in the early music circles, they knew who my father was. It was a point of pride for me, but it also gave me instant credibility and just a hint of my own star power by proximity. What I did not know about my father until just a few years ago was that he struggled with stage fright. From what I know through my experiences and what I've pieced together from anecdotes told about him many years later, I've come to suspect that I may have inherited a predisposition for depression and panic from him. My famous yet fearful father.

It's the humanity of this fellow Hawkins that endears him to me. It's the fact that he was not an irresponsible or reckless

By ELIZABETH CONANT
Chicago Tribune



Elizabeth Conant is a musician, music teacher and blogger. She is the founder of the blog The Hillhouse in Greenfield and lives in upstate New York.

person, but rather a man dealing with recovery, with fame, with stress. Such a potent mix of things—a situation that few of us can understand. That this man dealt with insecurities and fear—even when he was at such a high level of fame and accomplishment—is a testament to the emotional frailty that is present in all of us.

None of us is the person we would have the world believe we are.

Let's try to realize that there is so much more to every story than we will ever see. We need to trust that no one is having an easy time of it; this is a hard planet. Human beings are all doing the best they can, just to get through.

Be an attentive and forgiving audience; everyone is putting on the best show they possibly can.

PUTIN

From Page 8

ern Europe fared better. Most nations became Western allies as NATO members, maintaining varying degrees of democracy.)

But the West seemingly took two decades to realize Putin in no ways resembles the leader British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher hailed in 1984 as one with whom "we can do business" and with whom President Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush negotiated significant nuclear arms cuts.

President George W. Bush, naively positive, said he looked in Putin's eye and "found him very straightforward and trustworthy." Similarly hopeful, President Barack Obama mocked Republican rival Mitt Romney's description of Russia as our "No. 1 geopolitical foe," accusing him of reviving 1980s foreign policy and adding, "The Cold War's been over for 20 years."

President Donald Trump claimed friendship with Putin but embarrassed the United States at their Helsinki summit by publicly accepting the Russian leader's disavowal of his interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Some Trump allies argue the former president's bluster and calculated uncertainty forestalled Russia from attacking Ukraine. John Bolton, the veteran GOP hardliner who was Trump's national security adviser, disputes that.

He told SiriusXM's Julie Mason he thought Putin saw "the president's hostility of NATO" and felt a re-elected Trump would leave the Western treaty, and "just ease Putin's path that much more."

Biden, more clear-headed about Putin, initially seemed to think negotiation was possible. But when American intelligence concluded the Russian president was planning war, Biden not only responded forcefully but forged a degree of Western unity that seemed impossible beforehand.

Whatever ultimately happens, the outcome will be disastrous for Ukraine. Even if it survives, it will emerge as a battered, brutalized country, though one which President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's heroic leadership has enabled to hold its national head high.

But it will also be disastrous for Russia and what could have been, had not Vladimir Putin — much like Donald Trump — been obsessed with reversing history instead of advancing it.






AMERICANS

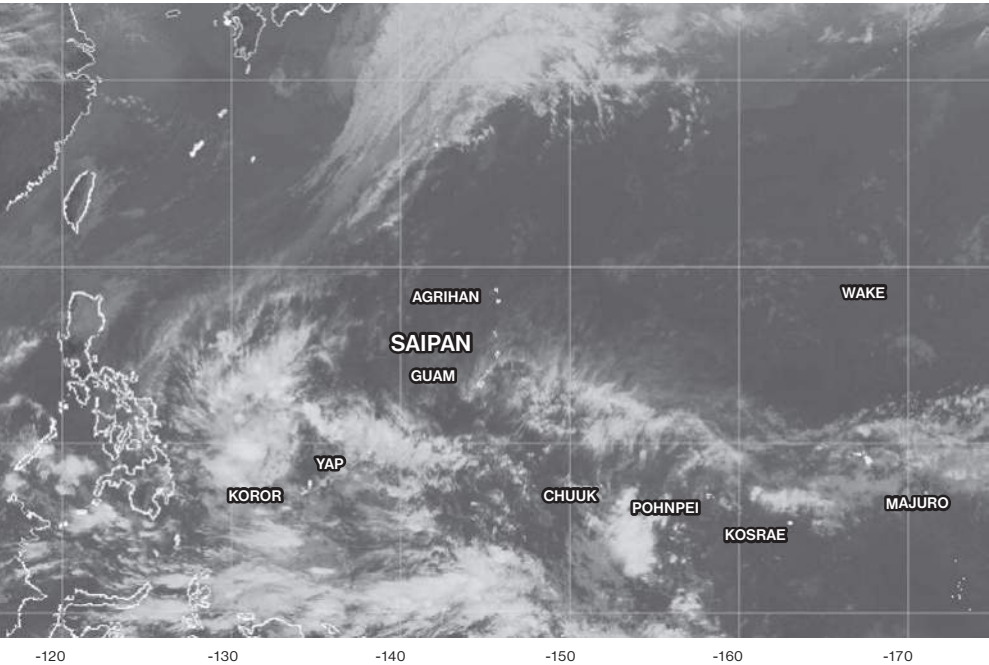
From Page 8

islatures approved election laws designed to reduce minority participation. Hundreds of companies, including American Airlines, Ford, General Motors, and Johnson & Johnson—signed full-page ads in The New York Times and The Washington Post condemning discriminatory voting legislation. Yet Citizens for Ethics says many have backtracked and resumed funding members of Congress who opposed voting rights legislation.

Americans are not just voters; they're consumers. If they don't like feeding greed or supporting war criminals and seditionists, a really good option is to take their business somewhere else.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms	
86°	77°	86°	78°	86°	78°	85°	76°	86°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:16 AM, MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Fair weather persists across the Marianas with moderate trade winds and seas of 6 to 8 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 sec-

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy/Wind	30 / 26 °F	
Palau	Thunderstorms	28 / 25 °F	
Yap	Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F	
Pohnpei	Scattered Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F	
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	30 / 27 °F	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	28 / 26 °F	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	05:52 AM	18:35 PM
Wednesday	05:51 AM	18:35 PM
Thursday	05:51 AM	18:35 PM
Friday	05:51 AM	18:36 PM
Saturday	05:50 AM	18:36 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	08:43	21:55 PM	-
Wednesday	09:26	22:48 PM	-
Thursday	10:12	22:48 PM	-
Friday	11:01	23:40 PM	-
Saturday	-	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	PM Showers	23 / 18 °F	
Beijing	Sunny	25 / 7 °F	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	24 / 19 °F	
Honolulu	Cloudy	27 / 21 °F	
London	Cloudy	14 / 9 °F	
Los Angeles	Sunny	26 / 15 °F	
Manila	Scattered Thunderstorms	32 / 26 °F	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	19 / 14 °F	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	28 / 25 °F	
New York	PM Showers	13 / 9 °F	
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	18 / 10 °F	
Paris	AM Showers	18 / 8 °F	
Busan	Mostly Cloudy	18 / 9 °F	
Rome	Sunny	18 / 6 °F	
Salem	Thunderstorm	20 / 17 °F	
San Francisco	Sunny	19 / 19 °F	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	17 / 5 °F	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	16 / 10 °F	
Washington, DC	AM Showers	19 / 12 °F	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
04:18 AM	Low Tide	0.95	
09:25 AM	High Tide	1.72	
4:35 PM	Low Tide	0.07	
11:26 PM	High Tide	1.66	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 28, 2022

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	6:40AM	7:20AM	1, 3, 5	UA116	5:00AM	5:45AM	1, 3, 5
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	2, 4, 6, 7	UA116	8:00AM	8:45AM	6, 7
				UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	2, 4
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	6:35AM	8:35AM	1, 3, 5, 6, 7	R110	10:35PM	4:35AM+1	2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA193	7:05PM	10:55PM	5 via Palau	UA184	10:25PM	4:20AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	7:10PM	9:10PM	Daily	UA192	10:25PM	6:05AM+1	5 via Palau
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				UA184	11:50PM	5:40AM+1	5
UA117/183	6:40AM	9:10PM	1, 3, 5 via Guam	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/193	6:40AM	10:55PM	5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	2, 4, 6, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
RS112	3:15PM	7:00PM	3, 6	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7	UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam
7C3405	3:30PM	7:25PM	6	INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3405	3:50PM	7:45PM	3	RS111	8:15AM	1:35PM	3, 6
OZ624	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6	7C3406	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				7C3406	8:50AM	2:30PM	3
7C3451	2:00PM	5:20PM	3, 7	TW9307	9:00AM	2:30PM	4, 7
				OZ623	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3452	8:00AM	1:00PM	3, 7				

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily	1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily	1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily	TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
ROTA TO GUAM				2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable	2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

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Business

Drug shortages persist in Russia after start of Ukraine war

First came the warnings, in messages among friends and families and on social media, to stock up on vital drugs in Russia before supplies were affected by crippling Western sanctions over the invasion of Ukraine.

Then, some drugs indeed became harder to find at pharmacies in Moscow and other cities.

"Not a single pharmacy in the city has it now," a resident of Kazan told The Associated Press in late March about a blood thinner her father needs.

Experts and health authorities in Russia say the drug shortages are temporary—due to panic-buying and logistical difficulties for suppliers from the sanctions—but some remain worried that high-quality medicines will keep disappearing in the Russian market.

"Most likely there will be shortages. How catastrophic it will be, I don't know," said Dr. Alexey Erlikh, head of the cardiac intensive care unit in Moscow Hospital No. 29, and a professor at the Moscow-based Pirogov Medical University.

Reports that Russians could not find certain medications in pharmacies started surfacing in early March, shortly



Customers stand at the windows buying medicines in a pharmacy in St. Petersburg, Russia, Friday, April 1, 2022.

after Moscow unleashed a war on Ukraine, and sweeping sanctions left Russia increasingly isolated from the rest of the world.

Patient's Monitor, a patients' rights group in the Russian region of Dagestan on the Caspian Sea, began getting complaints in the second week of March.

Ziyautdin Uvaysov, head of the group, told AP he personally checked with several

state-run pharmacies in the region on the availability of 10 most-wanted medications and "they didn't have a large number of these."

Uvaysov added that when he asked about when supplies would be restocked, the pharmacies replied that "there aren't any and it's unclear when there will be."

Despite assurances from authorities that hoarding of supplies was to blame for the

quickly emptying shelves, reports about shortages persisted throughout March.

Vrachi.Rf, one of Russia's biggest online communities for medical workers, surveyed more than 3,000 doctors in mid-March, and they said they had run into shortages of more than 80 medications: anti-inflammatory, gastrointestinal, antiepileptic and anticonvulsant drugs, as well as antidepressants and antipsychotics.

About a dozen people contacted by the AP in different

cities in late March said they had spent days searching for certain thyroid medications, types of insulin or even a popular pain-relieving syrup for children. Some said they were unable to find them at all.

"Patients I treat have lost some blood pressure medications," Erlikh said. "And some doctors I know are reporting problems with certain very expensive, very important medications (used in) certain surgical procedures."

Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko has repeatedly given assurances that drug availability is not a problem in the country and has blamed any shortages on panic-buying. He said the demand for certain drugs has spiked tenfold in recent weeks, and he has urged Russians not to hoard the medications.

Experts agree that panic-buying has played a role in creating drug shortages.

"People rushed to stock up, and in some cases, supplies that were supposed to last a year or a year and a half were bought out within a month," Nikolay Bespalov, development director of the RNC Pharma analytical company, told AP.

Bespalov also pointed to logistical problems that occurred early in the crisis. While major

Western pharmaceutical companies pledged not to withdraw vital medications from the Russian market, sanctions cut Russia's key banks from the SWIFT financial messaging system, hindering international payments. Dozens of countries halted air traffic with Russia, disrupting supply chains.

The expert stressed the logistical issues have been largely resolved, but panic-buying, prompted by fears that foreign companies will halt supplies, may continue fueling shortages for some time.

"Clearly, until the emotions calm down, it will continue," Bespalov said.

Local news sites—from Vladimir, just east of Moscow, to the Kemerovo region in Siberia—reported shortages of various medications in the final days of March amid continued panic-buying.

Russia's health care watchdog Roszdravnadzor, however, said in a statement Friday that "the situation on the drug market is gradually returning to normal, panic-buying of pharmaceuticals is decreasing."

Erlikh, the cardiologist, pointed to already-existing problems with quality medications in Russia, which according to some estimates imports up to 40% of its drugs.

Biden cites economic gains, but voters see much more to do

WASHINGTON (AP)—Seven months before he faces a critical test from voters in the midterm elections, President Joe Biden is turning his focus to kitchen-table issues as he struggles to get credit for a recovering economy.

Since Biden took office last year, job growth has been vigorous and steady—as he told the country Friday after the March jobs report showed the addition of 431,000 jobs and the unemployment rate falling to a low 3.6%. But those same remarks were also tempered by his recognition that food and gas prices are too high and inflation is at its worst level in a generation.

For Biden, convincing Americans of the progress made in the economic recovery only serves as a salient reminder of how much further the country has to go.

"Our economy has gone from being on the mend, to being on the move," Biden said, even as he acknowledged Americans are not ready for a victory lap. "I know that this job is not finished: We need to do more to get prices under control."

At times, Biden's bifurcated messaging—like the state of the economy itself—can seem like a jumble of contradictions.



President Joe Biden speaks about the March jobs report in the State Dining Room of the White House, April 1, 2022, in Washington.

It leaves voters to piece together their own opinions—potentially to the president's political peril.

Record wage gains of 5.6% over the past year, for example, run up against consumer prices that have risen at 7.9% annually. Biden's announcement this past week of plans to release a million barrels of oil daily from the U.S. strategic reserve over the next six months was a recognition of the harm that inflation can have not just on the economy but his own policy ambitions.

The economic discontent is reflected in Biden's standing in public opinion polls.

Roughly 7 in 10 people in the United States describe the economy as being in poor

shape, while nearly two-thirds disapprove of Biden's economic leadership, according to a March poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Administration officials and Biden allies happily point to the job creation data as a sign of accomplishment but they are also perturbed by the lingering economic malaise that threatens him with a historically inhospitable environment for a president's party in a midterm year.

They have advised Biden to spotlight his work to bring down gas prices and forthcoming efforts to try to curtail an increase in food prices from the war raging in the world's breadbasket of Ukraine.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Russia war could further escalate auto prices and shortages

DETROIT (AP)—BMW has halted production at two German factories. Mercedes is slowing work at its assembly plants. Volkswagen, warning of production stoppages, is looking for alternative sources for parts. For more than a year, the global auto industry has struggled with a disastrous shortage of computer chips and other vital parts that has shrunk production, slowed deliveries and sent prices for new and used cars soaring beyond reach for millions of consumers. Now, a new factor—Russia's war against Ukraine—has thrown up yet another obstacle. Critically important electrical wiring, made in Ukraine, is suddenly out of reach. With buyer demand high, materials scarce and the war causing new disruptions, vehicle prices are expected to head even higher well into next year. The war's damage to the auto industry has emerged first in Europe. But U.S. production will likely suffer eventually, too, if Russian exports of metals—from palladium for catalytic converters to nickel for electric vehicle batteries—are cut off.

Airlines cancel more than 3,500 US flights over weekend

Airlines have canceled more than 3,500 U.S. flights this weekend and delayed thousands more, citing weather in Florida and other issues. FlightAware, a website that tracks flights, noted major disruptions at several Florida airports, including in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa and Orlando, as well as Baltimore, New York and other airports around the country. JetBlue, Southwest, Alaska Airlines, Frontier, Spirit and American Airlines were most affected, according to FlightAware, with JetBlue and Spirit canceling one-third of Sunday's scheduled flights. Local news reported storms in Florida on Saturday. Several airlines said Sunday that operations are returning to normal. The spate of cancellations arrived as air travel is rebounding from the pandemic, with strong demand for spring-break flights. People on social media complained about waiting on hold or in lines for hours to get their canceled flights rescheduled and being stranded for days. (AP)

Lithuania cuts off Russian gas imports, urges EU to do same

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP)—Lithuania says it has cut itself off entirely of gas imports from Russia, apparently becoming the first of the European Union's 27 nations using Russian gas to break its energy dependence upon Moscow. "Seeking full energy independence from Russian gas, in response to Russia's energy blackmail in Europe and the war in Ukraine, Lithuania has completely abandoned Russian gas," Lithuania's energy ministry said in a statement late Saturday, adding that the measure took effect in the beginning of April. Lithuania managed to reduce imports of Russian gas to zero on Saturday, a move seen a milestone in achieving energy independence in the former Soviet republic of 2.8 million, the ministry said. "We are the first EU country among Gazprom's supply countries to gain independence from Russian gas supplies, and this is the result of a multi-year coherent energy policy and timely infrastructure decisions," Minister of Energy Dainius Kreivys said.

Nation

Police: At least 2 shooters kill 6, wound 12 in Sacramento

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—At least two shooters opened fire early Sunday in Sacramento in the city's second mass shooting in five weeks, killing six people and wounding 12 others as bars closed for the night and crowds emptied onto downtown streets, police said.

Three men and three women were killed, Police Chief Kathy Lester said. Their bodies remained on the pavement hours after the gunfire erupted around 2 a.m. Police sought clues from a crime scene that stretched across multiple city blocks as they searched for the shooters.

At least four of the wounded were hospitalized with life-threatening injuries. Authorities have not identified any of the victims or offered a possible motive.

Investigators pored through hundreds of pieces of evidence—much of it documented on the streets with blue and yellow markers—as officials begged the public to come forward with tips and videos that could help find the suspects.

Councilmember Katie Valenzuela, who represents the area, said she's fielded many phone calls reporting violence



A roadblock is set a block away from the scene of an apparent mass shooting in Sacramento, Calif., Sunday, April 3, 2022.

AP

in her district during her 15 months in office. She cried at a news conference as she told reporters that the latest phone call woke her up at 2:30 a.m.

"I'm heartbroken and I'm outraged," she said. "Our community deserves better

than this."

Sunday's violence was the third time this year in the U.S. that at least six people have been killed in a mass shooting, according to a database compiled by The Associated Press,

USA Today and Northeastern University.

President Joe Biden called for action on gun crimes in a statement Sunday.

"Today, America once again mourns for another commu-

nity devastated by gun violence," Biden said. "But we must do more than mourn; we must act."

Sacramento has endured two mass shootings in the last five weeks. On Feb. 28,

a father killed his three daughters, a chaperone and himself in a Sacramento church during a weekly supervised visitation. David Mora, 39, was armed with a homemade semiautomatic rifle-style weapon, even though he was under a restraining order that prohibited him from possessing a firearm.

The area where Sunday's killings occurred is on the outskirts of the city's main entertainment district and has many bars and restaurants. It's anchored by the Golden One Center that attracts big-name concerts and is home to the NBA's Sacramento Kings. City officials have invested heavily in the area to promote development.

Videos on social media showed what appeared to be an altercation before the gunfire in California's capital city. Sgt. Zach Eaton, a police spokesperson, said investigators don't know if that fight led to the shooting.

Kelsey Schar was staying on the fourth floor of Citizen Hotel when she said she heard gunshots and saw flashes in the dark. She walked to the window and "saw a guy running and just shooting," Schar told the AP.

Police: 1 killed, 11 others hurt at a Dallas outdoor concert

DALLAS (AP)—One person was killed and 11 others were injured during a shooting at an outdoor concert in Dallas, police said.

At about 12:13 a.m. on Sunday, officers responded to a field in southeast Dallas where a concert was being held, police said in a statement.

Police say a preliminary investigation has found that during the concert, one person fired a gun into the air, then another unknown individual fired a gun in the crowd's direction.

Near the concert stage, police found 26-year-old Kealon Dejuane Gilmore lying on the ground with a gunshot wound to the head. Gilmore died at the scene.

Police say that 11 other individuals were shot during the concert. All the people who were hurt were taken to hospitals either by ambulance or by private vehicles. One person was in critical condition and the others were in stable condition. Three of the people hurt are juveniles, police said.

Lulu Smith, who attended the concert with her daughter, told WFAA-TV that it

was part of a trail ride event in which people drove their all-terrain vehicles, sat in the bed of trucks and paraded through the property before finishing up for a concert at the main stage.

Witnesses told the TV station the shooting happened after a fight broke out.

"Everybody was running," Smith said. "It was so jam-packed right here, you couldn't get in or out. When I got to my car, somebody was shooting. I rolled down my window and I heard (shots)."

No arrests have been made as police continue to investigate what prompted the shooting.

In statement, Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson called the shooting "horrific and unacceptable."

"Public safety remains our top priority, and I will be conferring with Police Chief Eddie Garcia to see what more can be done to stop this kind of violence in our city," Johnson said.

Saturday night's shooting happened two weeks after 10 people were shot on March 19 during a spring break party at a Dallas event venue.

Mormon leader reaffirms faith's stance on same-sex marriage

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—A top leader in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reaffirmed the faith's opposition to same-sex marriage and "changes that confuse or alter gender" as debates over gender and sexuality reemerge throughout the United States.

Dallin H. Oaks, the second-highest-ranking leader of the faith known widely as the Mormon Church, told thou-

sands of listeners gathered at a conference center at the church's Salt Lake City headquarters that what he called "social and legal pressures" wouldn't compel the church to alter its stances on same-sex marriage or matters of gender identity that he did not specify.

The highest level of salvation, Oaks said, "can only be attained through faithfulness to the covenants of an eter-

nal marriage between a man and a woman. That divine doctrine is why we teach that gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose."

Oaks also said church doctrine "opposed changes that confuse or alter gender or homogenize the differences between men and women" and warned that "confusing gender, distorting marriage, and

discouraging childbearing" was the devil's work.

He also implored members of the faith to live peacefully and respect those with beliefs different than their own.

Oaks' remarks reaffirm the faith's long-held position on same-sex marriage that it has held to steadfastly even as its softened its policies on other LGBTQ matters, including allowing the children of same-sex couples to be baptized.

States look for solutions as US fentanyl deaths keep rising

By GEOFF MULVIHILL
ASSOCIATED PRESS

As the addiction and overdose crisis that has gripped the U.S. for two decades turns even deadlier, state governments are scrambling for ways to stem the destruction wrought by fentanyl and other synthetic opioids.

In statehouses across the country, lawmakers have been considering and adopting laws on two fronts: reducing the risk to users and increasing the penalties for dealing fentanyl or mixing it with other drugs. Meanwhile, Republican state attorneys general are calling for more federal action, while some GOP governors are deploying National Guard units with a mission that includes



A display of the fentanyl and meth that was seized by Customs and Border Protection officers over the weekend at the Nogales Port of Entry is shown during a press conference on Thursday, Jan. 31, 2019, in Nogales, Ariz.

AP

stopping the flow of fentanyl from Mexico.

"It's a fine line to help people and try to get people clean, and at the same time incarcer-

ate and get the drug dealers off the streets," said Nathan Manning, a Republican state senator in Ohio who is sponsoring legislation to make it clear that

materials used to test drugs for fentanyl are legal.

The urgency is heightened because of the deepening impact of the drugs. Last year, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the nation had hit a grim milestone. For the first time, more than 100,000 Americans had died of drug overdoses over a 12-month period. About two-thirds of the deaths were linked to fentanyl and other synthetic drugs, which can be 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine, heroin or prescription opioids.

The recent case of five West Point cadets who overdosed on fentanyl-laced cocaine during spring break in Florida put the dangers and pervasiveness of the fentanyl crisis back in the spotlight.

Asia

Sri Lanka's sports exec quits, while Cabinet offers to resign

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lanka's sports minister and the president's nephew, Namal Rajapaksa, has resigned from his position amid growing public outrage over the country's economic crisis and shortages of food, fuel and medicines.

The entire Sri Lankan Cabinet also has handed over letters to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa offering to resign from their positions due to the economic crisis in the country, Education Minister Dinesh Gunawardena told reporters late Sunday.

"I have informed the secretary to the president of my resignation from all portfolios with immediate effect..." Namal Rajapaksa tweeted, saying he hopes his decision helps President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is his father, in establishing stability for the people and the government.

Namal also held the portfolio of youth affairs.

Gunawardena said the president and the prime minister will take appropriate action on the Cabinet's offer to resign.

Government coalition parties are demanding that a caretaker Cabinet be appointed to pull the country out of the crisis.

The actions appear to be ef-

forts to pacify the people, who are protesting countrywide to hold the president and the entire Rajapaksa family responsible.

Sri Lanka's political power is concentrated in the Rajapaksa family. In addition to brothers being president and prime minister, two other brothers are ministers of finance and irrigation. Namal was also a Cabinet minister until he resigned.

On Sunday, Sri Lankan professionals, students and even mothers with small children defied an emergency decree and curfew to demand the president's resignation.

Police fired tear gas and water canons at hundreds of university students who were trying to break through barricades near the town of Kandy in the tea growing region. Near Colombo, students demonstrated and dispersed while armed soldiers and police stopped opposition lawmakers from marching to the iconic Independence Square.

"This is unconstitutional," opposition leader Sajith Premadasa told the troops who blocked their path. "You are violating the law. Please think of the people who are suffering. Why are you protecting a government like this?"

For several months, Sri Lankans have endured long

lines to buy fuel, foods and medicines, most of which comes from abroad and is paid for in hard currency. The first to disappear from shops was milk powder and cooking gas, followed by a fuel shortage disrupting transport and causing rolling power cuts lasting several hours a day at the end of February.

The extent of the crisis became clear when Sri Lanka couldn't pay for imports of basic supplies because of its huge debts and dwindling foreign reserves. The country's usable foreign reserves are said to be less than \$400 million, according to experts, and it has nearly \$7 billion in foreign debt obligations for this year alone.

Rajapaksa last month said his government was in talks with the International Monetary Fund and turned to China and India for loans while he appealed to people to limit the use of fuel and electricity and "extend their support to the country."

As protests grew and calls increased for him to step down, Rajapaksa doubled down and at midnight Friday assumed emergency powers by decree. The government also declared a countrywide curfew until Monday morning.

their backs. Kishida said "Japan will firmly carry out what it should do" while cooperating with the international society in possible further sanctions against Russia. "We must strongly condemn human rights problems and actions that violate international law," Kishida added. Japan has imposed a series of sanctions against Russia in line with the United States and other Western nations. (AP)

S. Korea's incoming president nominates his prime minister

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korean President-elect Yoon Suk Yeol on Sunday announced his intent to name a seasoned former prime minister and economic expert to serve as the country's No. 2 official under his incoming government. Yoon's pick of Han Duck-soo for prime minister is the first major nomination in his government, which is set to be inaugurated on May 10. South Korea's executive power is concentrated with the president, but the prime minister leads the country if the president becomes incapacitated. A nomination of prime minister requires parliamentary approval. Han, 72, held a string of top spots such as trade minister, finance minister and prime minister when South Korea was governed by back-to-back liberal presidents, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, from 1998 to 2008. During the next conservative government of President Lee Myung-bak, Han was South Korea's ambassador to the United States.

World

WITH CITY STREWN WITH BODIES Ukraine accuses Russia of massacre



A mass grave in Bucha, on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday, April 3, 2022.

AP

BUCHA, Ukraine (AP)—Bodies with bound hands, close-range gunshot wounds and signs of torture lay scattered in a city on the outskirts of Kyiv after Russian soldiers withdrew from the area. Ukrainian authorities accused the departing forces on Sunday of committing war crimes and leaving behind a "scene from a horror movie."

As images of the bodies emerged from Bucha, European leaders condemned the atrocities and called for tougher sanctions against Moscow. In a sign of how the horrific reports shook many leaders, Germany's defense minister even suggested that the European Union consider banning Russian gas imports.

Ukrainian officials said the bodies of 410 civilians were found in Kyiv-area towns that were recently retaken from Russian forces.

Associated Press journalists saw the bodies of at least 21 people in various spots around Bucha, northwest of the capital. One group of nine, all in civilian clothes, were scattered around a site that residents said Russian troops used as a base. They appeared to have been killed at close range. At least two had their hands tied behind their backs, one was shot in the head, and another's legs were bound.

Ukrainian officials laid the blame for the killings squarely at the feet of Russian troops, with the president calling them evidence of genocide. But Russia's Defense Ministry rejected the accusations as "provocation."

The discoveries followed

the Russian retreat from the area after Moscow said it was focusing its offensive on the country's east. Russian troops had rolled into Bucha in the early days of the invasion and stayed up until March 30.

One resident, who refused to give his name out of fear for his safety, said that Russian troops went building to building and took people out of the basements where they were hiding, checking their phones for any evidence of anti-Russian activity before taking them away or shooting them.

Hanna Herega, another resident, said Russian troops started shooting at a neighbor who had gone out to gather wood for heating.

"They hit him a bit above the heel, crushing the bone, and he fell down," Herega said. "Then they shot off his left leg completely, with the boot. Then they shot him all over."

The AP also saw two bodies, that of a man and a woman, wrapped in plastic that residents said they had covered and placed in a shaft until a proper funeral could be arranged.

"He put his hands up, and they shot him," said the resident who refused to be identified.

Oleksiy Arestovych, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, described bodies lying in suburban streets as a "scene from a horror movie." He claimed some of the women had been raped before being killed and the Russians then burned the bodies.

In a video address, Zelenskyy said Russian soldiers

who killed and tortured civilians were responsible for "concentrated evil."

"It is time to do everything possible to make the war crimes of the Russian military the last manifestation of such evil on earth," he said in remarks translated by his office.

He directed some of his remarks at the mothers of Russian soldiers involved.

"Even if you raised looters, how did they also become butchers?" he said. "You couldn't overlook that they are deprived of everything human. No soul. No heart. They killed deliberately and with pleasure."

Zelenskyy said his government would take steps to create a special justice mechanism to investigate every crime committed by the Russian forces in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy also appeared in a video message at Sunday's Grammy Awards, contrasting the lives of those attending the award ceremony in Las Vegas with the lives of musicians in his battered homeland.

"Our musicians wear body armor instead of tuxedos. They sing to the wounded in hospitals, even to those who can't hear them," he said. "But the music will break through anyway."

Russia's Defense Ministry said in a statement that photos and videos of dead bodies "have been stage managed by the Kyiv regime for the Western media."

The ministry said "not a single civilian" in Bucha had faced any violent military action and the mayor did not mention any abuses a day after Russian troops left.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam says she won't seek second term

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam, who survived massive protests against her government in 2019 and oversaw the implementation of a tough national security law that quashed dissent, said Monday she will not seek a second term. Her successor will be picked in May. "I will complete my five-year term as chief executive on the 30th of June this year, and I will also call an end to my 42 years of public service," Lam said at a news conference. Speculation had swirled for months about whether she would seek another term, but she said that her decision had been conveyed to the central government in Beijing last year and was met with "respect and understanding." Massive protests against the territory's government rocked Hong Kong in 2019 including calls for Lam to step down. Beijing responded in 2020 with a tough national security law that has stifled dissent in the semiautonomous Chinese city.

Japan condemns attacks on Ukraine civilians

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters Monday that he strongly condemned the reported attacks on civilians in Ukrainian towns on the outskirts of Kyiv "as violation to international law." European leaders have already condemned the reported attacks, responding to images of bodies in the streets, including some with their hands tied behind

Overdrive

Gas above \$4? No fear, 113 MPG Toyota Prius Prime is here

By HENRY PAYNE
THE DETROIT NEWS

Gas has jumped to an average of \$4.25 a gallon here in Detroit, and the Toyota Prius Prime plug-in is ready for prime time. I plugged it into my home 240-volt wall charger and filled my battery with 25 miles of charge in two hours at a cost of \$1.50. When the battery was spent after a day chasing errands, the gas engine kicked in with another 640 miles of range at my disposal at 54 mpg. Enough to drive non-stop to New York City to visit my son if necessary.

The Toyota what? Prius? Dude, that's so 15 minutes ago.

The last time gas hit \$4 a gallon in 2008, the Prius hybrid was all the rage. Sales soared to 158,884 units a year on their way to a record 234,228 by 2013. All the cool kids had one. Leo DiCaprio, Cameron Diaz and Tom Hanks arrived at the Oscars in a Prius. Presidential candidate Barack Obama swaggered into Detroit and berated Detroit automakers for not making a Prius. So morally righteous were owners that the

Japanese hatchback gained the nickname "Pious."

Today, despite soaring gas prices, the Prius is all but forgotten despite the addition of a plug-in model in 2013. Green elites have moved on to other shiny toys. Poles shame Americans for not buying electric vehicles. Leo drives a Polestar 2 and Stephen Colbert brags he never has to visit the gas pump in his Tesla. Model 3 is the new Pious.

But for Americans tired of shelling out \$60 each time they fill up their Toyota Camry, the Prius is an appealing bargain.

Indeed, my loaded, top-trim Limited tester clocked in at \$35,000—that magical, affordable number that Tesla's Model 3 sedan once promised but never delivered. Of course, there is always a better value, and Prime is pricey compared to one of my all-time favorite Detroit fuel sippers: the \$15,000 (in today's dollars), 1995 Geo Metro three-cylinder that returned an impressive 47 mpg. It didn't last.

Prime presents itself in a package as instantly recognizable as a Tesla: Angular profile, split-rear window, vertical



(TOYOTA/TNS)
The Toyota Prius Prime.

running lights. That, and my tester was as bright blue as a newly-dyed Easter egg.

I flung it around Oakland County, the Prius's compact, stiffened chassis much-improved over the first-gen's pasta noodle.

But you won't mistake it for a Tesla. I floored Pious out of a stoplight and the front-wheel-drive electric motor briefly woke up as if startled, then settled into a slow trot. When the gas engine kicks in, it drones on like John Kerry at a Davos climate change conference. Prime offers a POWER sport mode to complement NORMAL and ECO, but I couldn't tell the difference.

Leave it in ECO because the real charm of this fuel sipper is its double life as a daily EV/640-mile gas burner. Today, greens tout EVs with 500-mile electric range—but that's for a \$140,000 Lucid Air. For that price, you can buy four Primes that go farther.

Plug-ins are a solution GM once believed was the Holy Grail. Embarrassed by Prius hybrid getting all that Oscars attention, the Volt plug-in

promised 53 miles before the gas engine kicked in, and 420 miles total range. But Volt ultimately joined the Geo Metro on the scrap heap.

"Hybrids didn't sell very well," GM President Mark Reuss told Fox News in explaining the General's decision to abandon plug-ins. "You're still carrying two propulsion systems. That's not very efficient."

The slow-selling Bolt EV followed. Next up? The Model Y-beating Chevy Equinox EV.

Meanwhile, Prius Prime plug-in soldiers on.

As satisfying as its gas price-defying range is, however, it comes at a cost if you want quick, two-hour recharges. A 240-volt Juicebox charger plus installation could set you back \$2,000 in a 1970s-vintage-house like mine.

Better to plug in to a standard 120-volt wall socket for 5 ½ hours every night. That's because a comparably-equipped \$25K Corolla compact hatchback also comes in Easter egg blue and also answers your gas budget woes with 35 mpg. Prius Prime,

EPA tells us, gets a whopping 54 mpg. Let's do the math. If you're traveling an average of 15,000 miles year, that means Prime will save you a whopping \$640 annually with petrol at \$4.25 a gallon.

Here comes the "but" you've been waiting for.

Gas prices would have to continue at \$4.25 a gallon for nearly 16 years before you would recoup the costs of your Prime premium over the Corolla. What if you only (improbably) used the Prime on electric charge? EPA says you'd get 113 MPGe and save \$1,061—in which case gas prices would have to continue at \$4.25 a gallon for nine years before you would recoup the costs of your Prime premium over the Corolla. Qualify for the federal \$4,500 tax credit and payback is in five years.

That's a lotta math, which is why battery-powered vehicles remain a market niche. Last year, Prius only sold 60,000 units. Prius faithful enjoy a unique driving environment.

Prius beat Tesla to market by remodeling the vehicle

dashboard. It removed the instrument display behind the steering wheel, then relocated it at the base of the windshield with digital graphics so you can watch the powertrain transition from electric to gas power. Redundantly, Prime offers a head-up display for 2022. I barely noticed it was there. The Toyota's signature stubby, dash-mounted shifter frees up console space for a smartphone charging pad.

If it's an Android smartphone like mine, however, it is useless for navigation on the Prime Limited's big 12-inch screen, which doesn't offer Android Auto. That's a drag as disappointing as the Prius's lethargic acceleration. Despite the promise of its Tesla-sized screen, Prime is half-hearted about tech. I craved Android Auto because the native nav system is stuck in the last century.

Toyota clearly understands customers want SUVs and it has equipped its best-selling RAV4 ute with a plug-in model featuring more power and electronic capability (yes, it has Apple CarPlay and Android Auto). I could see my little Prius smiling with fatherly pride in the driveway. It may not be as hip as it was 20 years ago, but it has spawned a new generation of plug-ins.

The bigger RAV4 Prime is a chip off the ol' block with 94 MPGe and range of 20 miles on a charge. It has significantly better acceleration, too. But it'll cost you, ahem, \$49,000 for a loaded, top trim model. That's a \$13,000 premium over a comparable gas-powered RAV4. More math.

My guess is the average Toyota buyer is yelling: Drill, baby, drill!

NUTS & BOLTS

- Vehicle type: Front-engine, front-wheel-drive, five-passenger hatchback plug-in
- Price: \$29,245, including \$1,025 destination fee (\$35,284 as tested)
- Powerplant: 1.8-liter inline-4 cylinder with two AC motors and 8.8-kWh lithium-ion battery pack
- Power: 121 horsepower
- Transmission: Continuously variable automatic
- Performance: 0-60 mph

- 10.2 sec. (Car and Driver); top speed, 101 mph
- Weight: 3,375 pounds (Limited as tested)
- Fuel economy: EPA, 113 MPGe (electric and gas combined); 54 MPG combined (gas only)
- Report card
- Highs: Easy on the gas; 25 electric miles for daily commute
- Lows: Slug-like acceleration; no Android Auto
- Overall: 3 stars

MOTORMOUTH: Is car OK after sitting for 2 years?

Q: I am writing on behalf of my 94-year-old dad, who has a 2000 Dodge Intrepid with 110,249 miles that hasn't been driven for about two years. His neighbor would like to buy the car. However, he has heard that if a car has not been used for a long time, the cylinders are dry and should be oiled before driving. Is that true? If so, how do we go about doing it, or would it need to be towed to a garage? What would the cost for something like that be?

A: Unless the car has been sitting in a corn field for several years, the cylinders may not be dry. A garaged car may still have an oil film. Chances are, it is OK. To be on the safe

side, you could squirt a bit of oil into each cylinder by removing the spark plugs. But I suggest giving the car a compete once-over by a pro. It may take about an hour or close to \$100. On the lift, the tech can check for leaks and change the oil if necessary. The oil must be clean. The air filter should not be a mansion for mice. The gas will be stale so adding fresh stuff along with some fuel conditioner is a good idea. The tires are likely OK. Once the vehicle is base-lined, the new owner can drive it with confidence.

Q. I read and enjoy your column every Saturday in the Las Vegas Review Journal. I drive my 2020 Toyota Camry

TRD about twice a week. If I were to use a battery maintainer, would it harm my electrical system? I ask because of all the components on the new cars. I use one on my 1967 GTO, which helps me in keeping the battery charged up.

A: No, a battery maintainer will do no harm to neither a new, high-tech car nor your classic, low-tech "Goat."

Q: Since moving to the Twin Cities in June, I have been searching for stations prominently displaying the Top Tier logo. Every list of TT vendors I've found includes BP and Holiday (just two examples), but I have yet to see any labeling or signage about Top Tier at any of these

stations around here. Early on, I went to a BP station hoping to find TT. No labels, no signage. I went inside to ask and was not surprised at the blank stare I got. I believe Acura says my 2017 RD should burn only Top Tier. When I lived in California, I grudgingly paid the premium at Arco, and religiously saved every receipt in case I had a warranty claim and wanted to prove that I was a Top Tier apostle.

A: You won't see any neon signs announcing, "We have Top Tier gasoline." But there is usually a sticker on the pump stating so. Oil companies agree to sell only fuel that meets the Top Tier standard at all of their retail outlets. You can find the

By BOB WEBER

Chicago Tribune

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 160 N. Stetson Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.



list of stations at the organization's website (www.toptiergas.com), which states:

■ All retail locations within the licensed country must meet the high standards of the TOP TIER program.

■ All gasoline grades must be treated with an approved

TOP TIER Detergent Gasoline additive at the correct concentration.

■ The TOP TIER logo must be prominently displayed.

■ TOP TIER licensed retailers agree to not use organometallic additives (such as MMT or Ferrocene).

Life & Style

Jon Batiste tops Grammys; Silk Sonic soars, Rodrigo crowned

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Olivia Rodrigo made an impressive Grammy debut, Silk Sonic claimed two major awards and Jon Batiste had the most stunning victory of the night winning the top prize at Sunday's Grammy Awards.

Batiste won five Grammys Sunday including album of the year for "We Are" pulling off an upset in a loaded category filled with tough competition from Rodrigo, Billie Eilish, Taylor Swift and the combined talents of Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga. After his win, the multi-genre performer honored the artists he beat, telling the

audience that "the creative arts are subjective. Be you."

"I just put my head down and I work on the craft every day," said Batiste, who won for his song "Cry," the video for "Freedom" and his work with the Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross on the soundtrack for "Soul."

Silk Sonic—the all-star union of Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak—took home awards in all four categories it was nominated in, including record and song of the year. Both were exuberant as they accepted the honor toward the end of the ceremony.

The wins in both major

categories put Mars on the brink of history: He became the only artist along with Paul Simon to take win record of the year three times. He tied the record for most song of the year wins with two.

"We are really trying our hardest to remain humble at this point," .Paak said. "But in the industry, they call that a clean sweep!" later adding "drinks is on Silk Sonic tonight!"

Rodrigo's win for best new artist put her in esteemed company including Carly Simon, Crosby, Stills & Nash, Tom Jones, the Beatles and Billie Eilish.

A veteran of the "High School Musical" series, she became the breakout music star of 2021, leading with her massive viral hit "Drivers License" and following with the single "Good 4 U" and the aching album "Sour," which took best pop vocal album.

"This is my biggest dream



AP
Jon Batiste, winner of the awards for best American roots performance for "Cry," best American roots song for "Cry," best music video for "Freedom," best score soundtrack for visual media for "Soul," and album of the year for "We Are," poses in the press room at the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena on Sunday, April 3, 2022, in Las Vegas.

'Fill the silence with your music,' Zelenskyy tells the Grammys

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy appeared in a video message at the Grammy Awards to ask for support in telling the story of Ukraine's invasion by Russia.

During the message that aired on the show Sunday, he likened the invasion to a deadly silence threatening to extinguish the dreams and lives of the Ukrainian people, including children.

"Our musicians wear body armor instead of tuxedos. They sing to the wounded in hospitals, even to those who can't hear them," he said. "But the music will break through anyway."

The Recording Academy, with its partner Global Citi-

zen, prior to the ceremony highlighted a social media campaign called "Stand Up For Ukraine" to raise money and support during the humanitarian crisis.

"Fill the silence with your music. Fill it today to tell our story. Tell the truth about the war on your social networks, on TV, support us in any way you can any, but not silence. And then peace will come to all our cities," Zelenskyy said.

Following Zelenskyy's message, John Legend performed his song "Free" with Ukrainian musicians Siuzanna Iglidan and Mika Newton, and poet Lyuba Yakimchuk, as images from the war were shown on screens behind them.

come true," she said after her best new artist win. She thanked her parents for supporting her dreams, which at one point involved being an

Olympic gymnast and quickly veered toward music.

"I want to thank my mom for being so supportive for all of my dreams, no matter how crazy. I

want to thank my mom and dad for being equally as proud of me for winning a Grammy as they were when I learned how to do a back walk."

Estelle Harris, 'Seinfeld' and 'Toy Story' actor, dies at 93

NEW YORK (AP)—Estelle Harris, who hollered her way into TV history as George Costanza's short-fused mother on "Seinfeld" and voiced Mrs. Potato Head in the "Toy Story" franchise, has died. She was 93.

As middle-class matron Estelle Costanza, Harris put a memorable stamp on her recurring role in the smash 1990s sitcom. With her high-pitched voice and humorously overbearing attitude, she was

an archetype of maternal indignation.

Trading insults and absurdities with her on-screen husband, played by Jerry Stiller, Harris helped create a parental pair that would leave Harris even a psychiatrist helpless to do anything but hope they'd move to Florida—as their son, played by Jason Alexander, fruitlessly encouraged them to do.



Harris

Harris' agent Michael Eisenstadt confirmed the actor's death in Palm Desert, California, on Saturday evening.

Viewers of all backgrounds would tell her she was just like their own mothers, Harris often said.

"She is the mother that everybody loves, even though she's a pain in the neck," she told the Pittsburgh Post-Ga-

zette in 1998.

The career-defining role came after decades on stage and screen. Born April 22, 1928, in New York City, Harris grew up in the city and later in the Pittsburgh suburb of Tarentum, Pennsylvania, where her father owned a candy store. She started tapping her comedic talents in high school productions where she realized she "could make the audience get hysterical," as she told People magazine in 1995.

Lengthy marriage now includes threats and ill will

DEAR ABBY: I am a 50-year-old man, married for 25 years. My wife is older than me. In the beginning, it was great, but our relationship slowly started failing, and now we argue about everything. I feel like I'm trapped in a cage. We don't have one single thing in common anymore.

I want a happy life with or without her, but I see nothing but darkness around me. When I ask for divorce, I get accused of cheating and threatened with paying her spousal support for the rest of my life. Marriage counseling doesn't seem to be an option. What should I do?

WANTS TO BE FREE IN OREGON

DEAR WANTS: If marriage counseling "isn't an option," it doesn't mean you can't get psychological counseling to help you become emotionally stronger. While you're at it, it is important that you talk with an attorney about the divorce laws in your state. Once you have done that, you will be better able to decide if you want to "live in darkness" for the rest of your life, or what you may have to sacrifice in order to be finally free. You deserve to be happy, and frankly, so does your wife, who also appears to be miserable.

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend of four years refuses to come clean to me about his infidelity and cheating. I've given him

countless chances to come forward, but he always denies it. I caught him with a girl who has been following us around the whole time we've been together.

Abby, I have done everything I could to get him to own up, but he doesn't! What should I have done or what can I do so my life can move forward and I won't have to worry about what he's doing? I'm heartbroken and he doesn't care.

TWO-TIMED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR TWO-TIMED: As you stated, you have been deeply hurt by your boyfriend's dishonesty, and he "doesn't care" about your feelings. He is who he is, and he isn't going to change. Obviously, one woman isn't enough for him. You have now wasted four precious years of your life—time you will never get back—on a cheater who lies consistently. Isn't that enough? Do what you should have done years ago and MOVE ON.

DEAR ABBY: I am a fourth grade student who is, let's say, good at math. I usually finish my math homework easily, but lately it's been piling up. The problem is, my classmates ask me for help a lot. I enjoy helping them, but sometimes it's hard to explain things, or I can't find the time to get my own work done.

The teacher is usually doing a math group with other students, so my friends can't ask her. Should I fall behind by helping my friends or focus on my own work and risk hurt-

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



ing their feelings?

STRESSED IN IDAHO

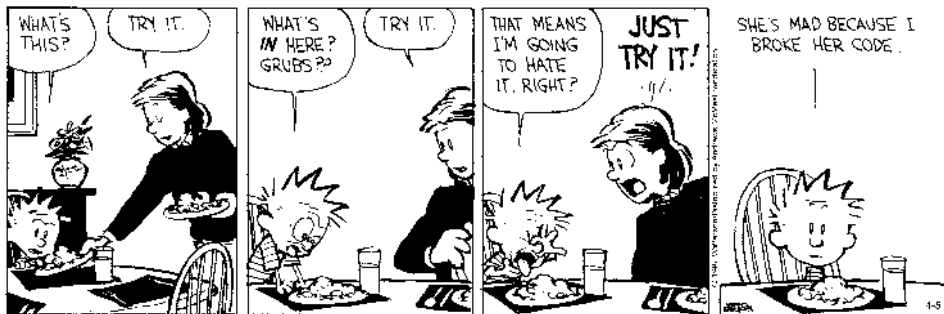
DEAR STRESSED: You shouldn't be helping your friends to the exclusion of your own work. It is important for your sake and your friends' that you discuss this with your math teacher. She needs to know she should be devoting more attention to the students outside her math group who need further instruction instead of relying on you to do it. After your work is finished, lend a hand to the other students if you wish.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



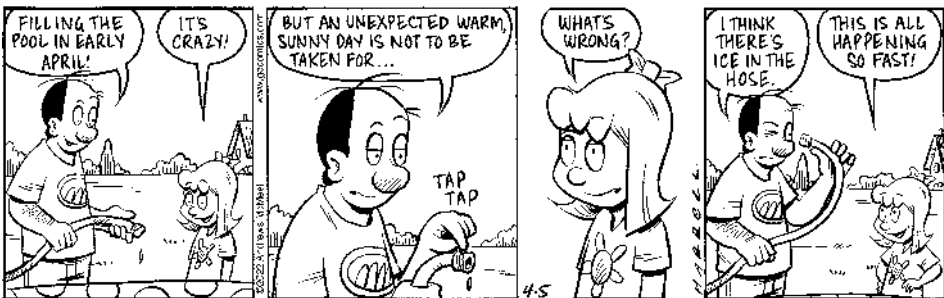
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Fury
5 Mouth part
8 Edge
12 "Roots" author Haley
13 Before
14 American Beauty, e.g.
15 Vulnerable
17 Greek vowels
18 Melody
19 Train rails
21 Glistened
24 Help a crook
25 Cattle group
26 Volunteer's words
30 Notre Dame's Par-seghian
31 Foolish
32 Casual shirt
33 Tech's workstation
35 Region

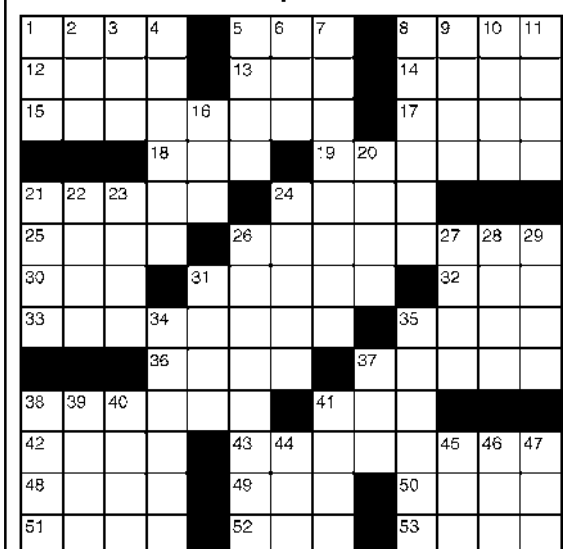
DOWN

36 Withered
37 Choir member
38 Patronize, as a hotel
41 Gratitude
42 Body powder
43 Seeks assistance
48 Platter
49 Whatever
50 Meditative discipline
51 — gin fizz
52 Fa follower
53 Authentic

16 Pub serving
17 Solidify
18 Broaden
19 Scoff
20 MGM motto
21 Persian leader
22 Roll call reply
23 Spoken
24 Build — against
26 Neon, for one
27 Thames town
28 Comic Jay
29 Equal
30 Notion
31 Soul
32 Gentle breeze
33 Poetic contraction
34 Norms (Abbr.)
35 Follow
36 Too
37 Texter's sign-off
38 Rock producer
39 Brian
40 Fair hirer, in ads
41 NYC airport
42 Chum

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-5



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Pharell Williams, 49; Mike McCready, 56; Mitch Pileggi, 70; Agnetha Faltskog, 72.

Happy Birthday: Put your talent to good use, and build something concrete. Refuse to let secrets, emotional problems or meddlers come between you and what you want to pursue. Think smart, follow through and choose to associate with positive individuals who offer solutions, not criticism. Put your thoughts in motion, and stand behind your work. Don't let personal matters drag you down. Your numbers are 7, 18, 21, 27, 32, 35, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't risk your health trying to impress someone. You are better off preparing by yourself and surprising everyone when you are satisfied with your offer. Confusion regarding love and money can be costly. You can't buy love. ****

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Put your head down, and focus on getting things done on time. Don't change direction mid-stream or let someone distract you. Your dependability and reputation are at stake, living up to expectations is necessary if you want to excel. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): An inquisitive attitude will help you differentiate what you can do and what you cannot. Put everything you've got into what you want most, and you won't be disappointed. Momentum will build, and you will reach your goal. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Check into financial options that will allow you to expand your interests and goals. Gather facts and figures, and don't assume anything.

Information is valuable, especially when trying to keep your costs down. Budget wisely. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Ask reliable people for assistance. A robust support system will help you avoid unwanted changes or restrictions. Use your intelligence to develop a workable plan and your brawn to initiate and finish what you want to achieve. ****

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take care of your health. Get involved in new prospects that will give you the edge when doing business with others. Detail and strategy will help you overcome any problem you encounter. Don't let emotions interfere with what's best for you. **

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You'll be privy to inside information. Attend meetings and participate in demonstrations that offer a vivid picture of what's to come. Networking and partnerships are in your best interest. Don't overspend or invest in people or products that promise the impossible. ****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Step outside your comfort zone, and size up what's happening. Having a clear picture will give you the wherewithal to decline an offer without hesitation. Use your insight to gain perspective, and don't be afraid to do your own thing. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Seize the moment, speak freely and put together a strategy that will help you stick to a budget, routine and plan that suits your lifestyle and long-term goal. Don't fall prey to someone toting colorful ideas that are costly and

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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unrealistic. ***

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Hone your skills, diversify and structure a plan that encourages you to earn your living doing something that brings you joy. Make domestic changes that incorporate a space conducive to being productive. Don't argue with a friend, relative or colleague. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You know the drill and how to get the most out of the least. Stick to your routine, give your all and use your intelligence to make a decision that encourages profit, comfort and convenience. Make fitness and love priorities. ****

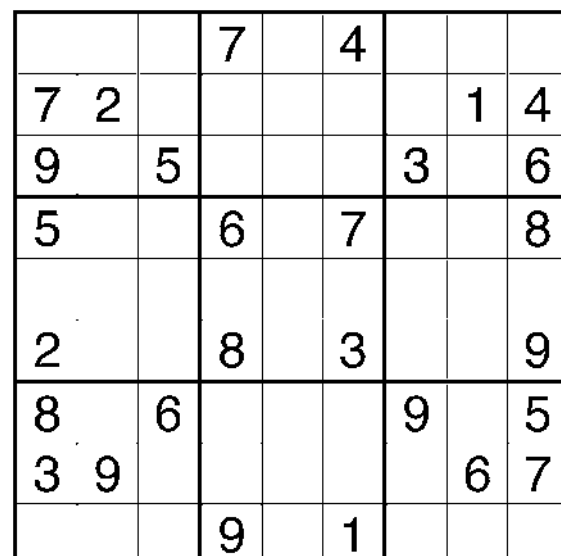
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Mind what others say and how they feel before you bring about change that can affect your reputation. Getting along will make your life easier. Find a way to compensate for any situation that disrupts the lives of others. Play fair. **

Birthday Baby: You are persistent, enthusiastic and playful. You are engaging and demonstrative. ☺ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☺ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☺☺ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☺☺☺ Aim high; start new projects. ☺☺☺☺ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



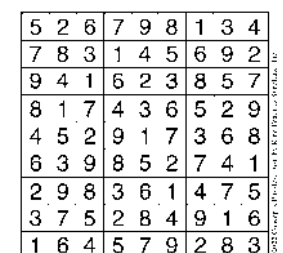
Difficulty Level ★★

4/05

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BRIDESMAIDS

Solution: 5 letters



©2022 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com

4/5

Aisle, Albums, Balloon, Card, Dance, Dessert, Dinner, Dress, Duty, Engagement, Family, Feet, Fitting, Fix, Flowers, Flowing, Food, Formal, Friend, Gift, Greeting, Idea, Jewelry, Junior, License, Ma'd, Makeup, Marriage, Nails, Partner, Party, Photos, Plan, Rehearsal, Rings, Seating, Shoes, Shop, Shower, Speech, Suit, Tars, Toast, Train, Travel, Veil, Venue, Wedding

Yesterday's Answer: Glazing

To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 53 through 68, order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Staley leads S. Carolina over UConn for second NCAA title

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Dawn Staley hoisted the championship trophy high, strutted around the court and stopped for a brief victory dance. She handed over the hardware to South Carolina's student band, then headed back to midcourt for more merriment.

The Gamecocks hit all the right notes this season, and they finished with a masterpiece.

Staley's team buttoned up on defense and dominated on the glass, beating UConn 64-49 on Sunday night to end the Huskies' undefeated streak in title games.

Destanni Henderson scored a career-high 26 points, Aliyah Boston added 11 points and 16 rebounds, and the Gamecocks handed Geno Auriemma's Huskies their first loss in 12 NCAA title games.

"We played every possession like it was our last possession," said Staley, the first Black men's or women's coach with two Division I titles. "They were determined to be champions today."

A year ago, South Carolina lost in the Final Four when Boston missed a layup before the buzzer.

"Honestly, I've been thinking about this since last season. Everyone had a picture of me crying," said Boston, who was the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four. "Today, we're national champions and I'm in tears."

With Staley calling the shots in a Louis Vuitton letterman jacket, South Carolina took UConn to school on the boards and capped a wire-to-wire run as the No. 1 team in the country in The Associated Press poll. The Gamecocks also won the championship in 2017 with A'ja Wilson leading the way.

This time it was Boston — the AP Player of the Year — and her fellow South Carolina post players who dominated on the game's biggest stage. The Gamecocks outrebounded UConn 49-24, including a 21-6 advantage on offensive boards.

"We knew tonight that if we didn't hold our own on the boards, that it was going to be a really bad night for us," Auriemma said. "And that's exactly what happened."

They also clamped down on star Paige Bueckers and the Huskies on defense, just like they did all season long.

"They deserved it 100%," Auriemma said. "They were the best team all year."

It was South Carolina's night from the start. The Gamecocks (35-2) jumped to an 11-2 lead, grabbing nearly every rebound on both ends of the floor. They led to 22-8 af-

ter one quarter much to the delight of their fans, who made the trip to Minneapolis to be part of the sellout crowd.

UConn (30-6) trailed by 16 in the second quarter before Bueckers, a Minnesota native, got going. After having just one shot in the first quarter, she scored nine points in the second to get the Huskies within 35-27 at the half. She finished with 14.

An 8-2 run to start the third quarter put South Carolina up 43-29 before the Huskies finally started connecting from behind the arc. UConn missed its first eight 3-point attempts until Caroline Ducharme made one from the wing and Evina Westbrook followed with another to get the Huskies within 43-37.

That's as close as they could get because of Henderson.

The senior guard had a three-point play to close the third quarter and then had the team's first four points in the fourth to restore the double-digit lead. The Huskies couldn't recover.

"My teammates believed in me once again. We've been working so hard since Day 1, and it finally paid off, all my hard work, all my focus," Henderson said. "Me trusting the process. Me trusting God. She just put me in a position just to be great, and today, we national champions."

This was UConn's first trip to the championship game since 2016, when the Huskies won the last of four straight titles. Since then, the team has suffered heartbreaking defeats in the national semifinals, losing twice in overtime, before holding off Stanford on Friday night. The Huskies were trying to win their 12th title in the same city they won their first one in 1995.

Auriemma said Saturday that when his team had won each of its 11 titles, the Huskies entered the game as the better team. They certainly weren't on Sunday.

"We just didn't have enough," he said. "They were just too good for us."

It had been one of the most challenging seasons of Auriemma's Hall of Fame career. UConn overcame losing eight players for at least two games with injury or illness, including Bueckers, who missed nearly three months with a left knee injury suffered in early December. She came back in late February but wasn't at the same level that earned her AP Player of the Year as a freshman last season.

DEFENSE WINS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Gamecocks have been stalwarts on defense all sea-



South Carolina celebrates after a college basketball game in the final round of the Women's Final Four NCAA tournament against UConn Sunday, April 3, 2022, in Minneapolis. South Carolina won 64-49 to win the championship.

son long, ranking third nationally with 50.5 points allowed per game. They were even sharper in the NCAA Tournament, holding opponents to 44.8 points entering Sunday's finale.

Duke's Scheyer ready for program's 'pivotal' coaching change

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Jon Scheyer tried to soak up every possible nugget and detail he could as retiring Mike Krzyzewski's designated successor in their final season together on the Duke sideline. Conversations on everything from game strategy to motivating players turned into an endless stream of notes and ideas, studiously documented on his iPad.

"He's got his madness with all his papers everywhere," Scheyer said with a chuckle. "And I've got my iPad. It's all right there."

Now it's time for the former Blue Devils player to call on every bit of that knowledge and experience. As of late Saturday night, Scheyer is Duke's new head coach after a Final Four loss to North Carolina ended Krzyzewski's Hall of Fame career. And Scheyer, 34, knows he's taking over at a crossover to sustain the Blue Devils' perch near the top of college basketball.

"I've really just positioned it for (recruits) where it's as pivotal of a moment in any program in the history of college basketball," Scheyer told a small group of reporters before the UNC loss. "I really feel that if you look through, there have been different teams in different eras that have been the best. But to sustain it, this is Duke's opportunity to continue to do that."

The Blue Devils have been

Henderson had three steals, Boston blocked two shots and South Carolina forced 15 turnovers. The Gamecocks' plus-25 rebounding margin was the second biggest ever in a title game.

BIG PICTURE

UConn: The Huskies lose three seniors in Christyn Williams, Westbrook and Olivia Nelson-Ododa but still have a solid group back led by Bueckers and freshman Azzi Fudd.

If the Huskies stay healthy, they'll have a good shot to contend for next year's title.

South Carolina: The Gamecocks lose Henderson and Victoria Saxton but have all the talent to repeat as champions.

that type of responsibility.

"There's no one that loves Duke basketball more than Coach K, so everyone should just be on board to know that he wouldn't really make a decision like that or be involved in it if he didn't think it was in the best interest of the program."

Scheyer aims to keep the conversations going with Krzyzewski, even though he expects the 75-year-old retiree will "try to never be around" to give Scheyer space to make this program fully his own.

"I just know him, and he's going to be so sensitive to what his presence does," Scheyer said of Krzyzewski. "For me, I guarantee this summer, I'm going to call him one day and say, 'Can you please come to a practice and watch us, and see what you think?'"

"We're going to be in close touch. I have a feeling it's going to be me reaching out to him more than it is him reaching out to me. ... No matter what his official title or role, responsibility is, I'm going to lean on him as we go forward."

Besides, Scheyer and his staff had already taken over recruiting duties fully while Krzyzewski stayed with the team in his final season.

One look at his first recruiting class illustrates the perfect-case scenario for how things could go, and why the Blue Devils aren't going anywhere anytime soon even as

the sport's winningest coach leaves the game.

Duke will be stacked again with the nation's No. 1-ranked class according to 247sports. That includes the top overall prospect Dereck Lively II (7-foot-1 center from Bellefonte, Pennsylvania), No. 3 prospect Kyle Filipowski (6-11 center from Wilbraham, Massachusetts) and No. 5 prospect Dariq Whitehead (6-6 wing from Newark, New Jersey).

The first weeks on the job for Scheyer will include getting back to recruiting while also beginning work to hire an assistant coach to fill his own now-vacant position. He must also figure how many of the current players will return, with NBA prospects like Paolo Banchero and A.J. Griffin possibly taking the one-and-done route to the pros.

Change is coming. Scheyer is ready for it.

"In a lot of ways, I feel more prepared than any coach ever because I've known and I've been able to prepare for this specific job," he said. "And in other ways, I don't know what to expect a little bit."

"But I do know it's going to be a roller-coaster, and I'm prepared for that. I know it's going to be ups and downs along the way. But I believe overall in what we're doing. I believe in the long-term success, getting it set up the right way. We'll be in a great position."

76ers clinch playoff spot with 112-108 win over Cavaliers



CLEVELAND (AP)—Joel Embiid did plenty of damage on his own. The Cavaliers, though, felt the big man got some unwarranted help.

Cleveland coach J.B. Bickerstaff was highly critical of the officiating after Embiid scored 44 points — and made 20 trips to the free throw line — in Philadelphia's 112-108 win over the Cavs on Sunday night.

"That game was taken from us," Bickerstaff said. "We deserved to win it."

Embiid added 17 rebounds and James Harden had 21 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in his second triple-double with Philadelphia as the 76ers locked up a playoff spot.

Embiid was questionable coming into the game with a sore ankle. But not only did the 7-footer play, Embiid dominated down the stretch, scoring 12 points in a key sequence of the fourth quarter.

He also made 17 free throws, added five blocks, made three 3-pointers and had three assists in 38 minutes of another MVP resume builder.

Embiid won't allow himself to get caught up in the debate.

"If it happens, great," he said of winning his first MVP. "If it doesn't, I don't know what I have to do. I'll feel like they hate me. I feel like the standard for guys in Philly or for me is different than everyone else."

Bickerstaff wasn't taking anything away from Embiid or Harden, but he was upset with what he thought was a major discrepancy in fouls. Cleveland was called for 28 to Philadelphia's 19 in a physical game with playoff-level intensity.

"The one thing you can't defend is the free throw line and that's absurd," Bickerstaff said, referring to the Sixers' 42 attempted foul shots. "Our guys deserved way better than they got tonight."

"They're great players and they understand how to play through the rules," he said of Philly's All-Stars. "They know how to manipulate the rules. This is no knock or disrespect to those guys. But the game has to be consistent on both ends of the floor. We were searching for that consistency and we never found it."

Darius Garland scored 23 and Caris LeVert and Lamar Stevens had 18 apiece for the Cavs, who played without injured 7-footers Evan Mobley and Jarrett Allen but battled one of the East's top teams to the finish.

Cleveland, which is trying to hang onto the No. 7 play-in spot, was within 107-106 when Bickerstaff felt Garland drew contact from Embiid



Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid, left, is fouled while going to the basket against Cleveland Cavaliers forward Lauri Markkanen in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, April 3, 2022, in Cleveland.

while missing an off-balance layup with 15.2 seconds left.

Thunder 117, Suns 96

In Oklahoma City, backup center Olivier Sarr scored a career-high 24 points and Aleksej Pokusevski recorded his first career triple-double to lead Oklahoma City over NBA-leading Phoenix.

Sarr came off the bench to shoot 9 of 12 from the field, including 5 of 6 from 3-point range. The other 7-footer, Pokusevski, had 17 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds while playing point guard for the bulk of the game.

The Thunder put seven players in double figures and took advantage of the Suns' worst 3-point shooting effort of the season. Playing without scoring leader Devin Booker, Phoenix hit just 7 of 38 (18.4%) beyond the arc, well below its previous season low of 22% in a January win over Dallas.

Mikal Bridges led Phoenix with 18 points.

Mavericks 118, Bucks 112

In Milwaukee, Luka Doncic scored 32 points and matched a season high with 15 assists to help Dallas defeat Milwaukee.

Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with 28 points and 10 rebounds. Milwaukee was essentially at full strength Sunday after resting all of its usual starters in a 153-119 loss to the Los Angeles Clippers on Friday night.

Doncic flirted with a triple-double before finishing with eight rebounds. In six career

games against the Bucks, Doncic has averaged 26.8 points, 11.3 assists and 9.2 rebounds with three triple-doubles.

Dallas' Dwight Powell added 22 points and 13 rebounds — one off his career high.

Celtics 144, Wizards 102

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored 32 points, Jayson Tatum had 22 and Boston cruised past Washington in the Celtics' regular-season home finale.

Jockeying for one of the top seeds in the Eastern Conference, Boston posted its 13th win in 16 games with three games left in the regular season.

Derrick White added 17 points, Grant Williams 16 and Payton Pritchard 14 for the Celtics, who finished 28-13 at TD Garden. Tatum had seven assists and six rebounds, while Brown added seven boards with five assists.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and Kristaps Porzingis each had 17 points for Washington, and Ish Smith finished with 16.

Nuggets 129, Lakers 118

In Los Angeles, Nikola Jokic had 38 points, 18 rebounds and six assists, and Denver moved into fifth place in the Western Conference with a victory over Los Angeles.

Will Barton scored 25 points and Aaron Gordon added 24 points and eight rebounds for the Nuggets, who capitalized on LeBron James' absence with a fourth-quarter surge to grab their fourth win in five games. Denver moved

a half-game ahead of Utah for the fifth spot in the playoff picture, getting further insurance against being forced into the play-in tournament.

Anthony Davis had 28 points, nine rebounds and eight assists for the 11th-place Lakers, whose play-in hopes waned further with their sixth consecutive loss. Los Angeles has lost 28 of 38 since Jan. 7. Russell Westbrook added 27 points and Carmelo Anthony had 17.

The Lakers were competitive against a superior opponent, yet couldn't overcome the absence of the NBA's leading scorer, who sat for the fourth time in six games to rest his sprained left ankle.

Pistons 121, Pacers 117

In Indianapolis, Saddiq Bey scored 31 points and Fred Jackson had 19 to lead sharpshooting Detroit past Indiana.

Bey hit 11 of 18 shots, including shooting 7 of 9 on 3-pointers, in 23 minutes. The Pistons, who have won three games in a row, sank 21 of 41 3-pointers and set a team record for 3s in a half with 13 in the opening two quarters.

Oshae Brissett scored 20 points and had nine rebounds to lead the Pacers, who have lost seven straight games. Tyrese Haliburton flirted with a triple-double with 19 points, a career high-tying 17 assists and nine rebounds. He became the first player in Pacers history to record at least 17 assists without a turnover and first to do it in the NBA since LeBron James on March 21, 2018.

Buddy Hield and Isiah Jackson also scored 19 each for the Pacers.

Knicks 118, Magic 88

In Orlando, Fla., RJ Barrett scored 27 points, Obi Toppin matched his career high with 20 and New York routed Orlando.

Toppin and Alec Burks scored 12 points each in a 37-point third quarter for the Knicks, who made 12 of their first 13 shots in the period. Burks finished with 19 points and seven rebounds, and Immanuel Quickley had his first triple-double (20 points, 10 rebounds, 10 assists) in 34 minutes off the bench.

Moritz Wagner led Orlando with 18 points and nine rebounds in the Magic's sixth straight loss.

Timberwolves 139, Rockets 132

In Houston, Anthony Edwards scored 33 points, Karl-Anthony Towns added 28 and Minnesota built a huge lead and held to beat Houston.

It's the second straight victory for Minnesota, which is in seventh place in the Western Conference with three games remaining. The Timberwolves led by as many as 25 in the fourth and were up by 16 with about five minutes to go before Houston scored the next eight points, with five from Josh Christopher to get within 132-124 a couple of minutes later.

Jalen Green had 31 points for Houston and Christopher scored a career-high 30 off the bench as the Rockets dropped their fourth straight. Christopher was the main reason Houston made it close late as he scored 19 points in the fourth quarter.

Heat 114, Raptors 109

In Toronto, Kyle Lowry had 16 points and 10 assists against his former team, Max Strus scored all of his 23 points in the second half, and Miami topped Toronto.

Victor Oladipo scored 21 points, Tyler Herro had 18 and Bam Adebayo 16 as the Heat won their fourth straight and remained two games ahead of Boston atop the Eastern Conference standings. Each team has three games remaining.

Fred VanVleet and Pascal Siakam each scored 29 points, and Scottie Barnes and Gary Trent Jr. both had 19 as Toronto lost for the first time in six games.

Spurs 113, Trail Blazers 92

In San Antonio, Keldon Johnson scored 28 points and San Antonio defeated short-handed Portland.

Coupled with the Los An-

geles Lakers' loss to Denver, San Antonio's magic number for clinching 10th place in the Western Conference is two games. The Spurs (33-45) also hold the tiebreaker over the Lakers (31-47) with a better conference record.

San Antonio won a two-game weekend series with Portland to complete a four-game sweep of the Trail Blazers. Zach Collins had 18 points and 13 rebounds for his first career double-double. Tre Jones added 18 points and Keita Bates-Diop 12.

The Blazers struggled to maintain any consistency offensively without Damian Lillard, Jusuf Nurkic, Josh Hart, Eric Bledsoe, Anfernee Simmons and several other injured players. Keon Johnson and Ben McLemore had 19 points each to lead Portland.

Warriors 109, Kings 90

In Sacramento, Calif., Andrew Wiggins scored 25 points, Jordan Poole added 22 and Golden State held off Sacramento.

Nemanja Bjelica had season highs of 19 points and 12 rebounds to go with his six assists in the Warriors' second straight win — something they hadn't done since early March.

Harrison Barnes had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings, who were eliminated from playoff contention with the loss. Sacramento lost all four games against Golden State this season.

Clippers 119, Pelicans 100

In Los Angeles, Marcus Morris Sr. scored 22 points, Ivica Zubac got his 22nd double-double of the season with 16 points and 14 rebounds, and Los Angeles prevented New Orleans from clinching a spot in the play-in tournament.

Morris made four 3-pointers for the Clippers, who were 21 of 44 from beyond the arc. It is the first time in franchise history they have made at least 20 in back-to-back games. Los Angeles made 23 3s and set a franchise record for points in a 153-119 victory over Milwaukee on Friday night.

Paul George had 15 points, seven assists and five rebounds in his third game back for the Clippers, who had six players in double figures. All of George's field goals were 3-pointers.

CJ McCollum had 19 points and Brandon Ingram added 15 for the Pelicans, who had their three-game winning streak snapped. New Orleans could have wrapped up a play-in tournament berth with a win after Denver defeated the Los Angeles Lakers earlier in the day.

'2022 Gold's Gym Challenge' starts on April 16

Gold's Gym Saipan will start its much-anticipated "2022 Gold's Gym Challenge" with the last day of sign-ups and final weigh-in on April 16.

Challengers will be competing for a piece of the \$5,000 cash prize pool. Overall winners plus age/gender category winners will be receiving cash prizes. Early bird weigh-in is on April 11 with the second weigh-in on April 13.

"Winners, of course, love the cash prizes. But, I see the sparkle in all of the challenger's eyes. They win! They feel healthier and stronger, and love the motivation the Challenge provides," said Gold's Gym general manager Tyce Mister.

He added that Gold's Gym Saipan launched the eight-week fitness campaign with the goal of changing lives in the Marianas. The Gold's Gym Challenge 2022 offers contestants an opportunity to exceed their fitness goals, transform themselves, and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Paul Ruechoway and Emily Santos were the winners of the 2021 Gold's Gym Saipan Transformation Challenge.

earn a chance to win cash prizes at the same time.

At Gold's Gym, the mission is to "Help people achieve their potential through fitness," added Mister. The Gold's Gym Challenge has proven time and

time again that participants surprise themselves with the changes made throughout their Challenge journey. Changes, not only with their body and fitness levels, but also with bigger things like self-discipline, willpower,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants of the 2021 Gold's Gym Saipan Transformation Challenge pose for a group photo during the awards banquet

inner strength, and positive changes in their relationships with others.

These Challengers will be measured and photographed at the start of the eight-week program to establish a point of reference for their transformation. At the end of the challenge, contestants will be measured and photographed once again to document the results of their progress and to determine the winners of each category.

The Gold's Gym Challenge is open to any individual, age 18 or older, that lives in the CNMI and is a Gold's Gym member throughout the Challenge. The cost to enter the Challenge is only

\$60. Please stop by Gold's Gym Saipan, located next to Sugar King Park, to register and to check out their 2022 Challenge Specials. Total cash prize pool ultimately depends on the number of participants.

Last year, Paul Ruechoway was the Overall Male Winner. Ruechoway shared, "The entire journey has completely changed my life. I've become the healthiest I've ever been in my life and I feel confident and secure in my own body. Joining Gold's Gym is one of the best decisions I've made in my life. I've found a new hobby and made great friends."

Emily Santos, the Over-

all Female Winner, shared her inspiration, "Always believe in yourself, even when you feel like quitting. The end result will become your greatest reward."

Gold's Gym Challenge has been an annual event since 2013. The Challenge serves the community to be a positive opportunity to promote health and fitness. Gold's Gym Saipan appreciates last year's partners for their tremendous support: PHI Pharmacy, Michelob Ultra, Brabu Pharmacy and Wellness Center, and TurnKey Solutions.

For more questions or information, contact Gold's Gym Saipan at (670) 233-4000. (PR)

Lady Tridents drop game to No-Brakes in BallHers-GBC Women's League



UOG

UOG Women's Basketball head coach Cil Olandez plays with the Tridents.

The UOG Recreation Club Team, the Lady Tridents, dropped a game in the BallHers-Guam Basketball Women's League at the GBC National Training Center on Sunday, 35-15.

The Tridents struggled to score in the first half, not scoring a point until the 5:23 mark left in the first half and trailing 15-5 at the end of the 20-minute half.

The Tridents scored a bit more in the second half but could not dig out of the hole they had dug for themselves

and lost the game, 35-15.

The No-Brakes improved their league record to 2-2 for the season while UOG fell to 0-4.

Rozanna Claros led UOG with 5 points, while Frencine Vilena scored 12 points for No-Brakes.

No-Brakes plays the BallHers next week on Sunday, April 10, at 1pm in the National Training Center, while the Tridents play the Lady Bombers at 2pm. April 10 will mark the end of the regular season for the league. (PR)



ROTA

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a historical event and showcase the talent, hospitality, and beauty of the NMI," he said.

"On behalf of the good people of Rota, we wish all of our participating athletes good luck and have fun," added Atalig.

Meanwhile, CNMI National Triathlon Team manager Jay Diyco said Rota hosting the sport of triathlon is a great opportunity for everyone in the CNMI and not only on Saipan to get into the spirit of the Mini Games.

"The triathlon event on Rota is a good option to give other islands a feel of the Pacific

Mini Games. I've not been to Rota but from what I heard people there are very friendly and hospitable so I think our athletes will be more inspired when Rota people cheer for them," he said.

Diyco also shared that to familiarize the triathlon national team to the course on Rota, the Triathlon Association of

the CNMI will be having a test event at the end of the month.

"We will just be conducting the test event this April 30 as part of the preparation for Pacific Mini Games and training of our athletes. The triathlon on Rota is not a competition, it is a test run and at the same time a course familiarization for our athletes," he said.

Last month, TRAC named five men and five women to the CNMI National Triathlon Team for the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022.

The women's team is made up of Kathy Ruszala, Heather Brook, Robin Spaeth, Kaithlyn Chavez, and Tania Tan, while the men's team consists of Dylan Mis-

ter, Isaiah Aleksenko, Christian Villacrusis, Erico Castro, and Leo Wania. Mick Ferris has been picked to coach the team with Diyco serving as manager.

So far, a total of 53 athletes have signed up for the triathlon competition which will be held at the Marina Harbor on Rota.

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seph Torres did his most damage in the payoff period, as the sweet-shooting two-guard fired 11 of his 29 points.

The game was tight from the get-go with MDC taking a 24-22 lead after the first 10 minutes of action. 670 Gravity returned the favor in the second quarter and led 42-41 at the half. It was still a seesaw affair in the third with

MDC leading, 65-62, heading into the fourth and final quarter, where Torres ultimately went berserk to lead 670 Gravity to its sixth win in 11 games. MDC, which was led by the 17 points apiece of Jude Tengco and Ariel Moises, dropped to 2-6.

The night before, 670 Gravity got win No. 5 after a 73-79 whipping of RNV Construction, which at that time was its ninth straight loss to start the season. Torres also paced 670 Gravity in that game with 23 markers.

In the second game last Friday, RNV Construction finally nailed its first win of the season after beating Royal Pacific, 73-55. Jun Ocampo and Pae Villacrusis combined for 37 points to lead RNV Construction to the breakthrough win. "Smoking" Jun Tabora paced Royal Pacific in the loss with 21 points. RNV Construction is now at 1-9, while Royal Pacific is at 2-6.

Vizion Insurance then improved to 5-3 after a 93-80 win over Supertech in the

nightcap last April 1. Ronald Rueda fired 33 points and Rodel Pastrana 24 points in the win. Supertech lost its sixth game in seven outings.

On Thursday, Paradise Realty (6-3) held back HBR International (5-3), 78-73, in the first game. In the second game league-leading The Game (7-1) routed JTM, 78-57.

First Game

670 Gravity 87 – Torres 29, Bernardo 21, Macaraig 12, Solis 11, Gaviola 4, Agustin 4,

Ramirez 4, Galulu 2.

MDC 85 – Tengco 17, Moises 17, Montes 16, Elchico 14, Apasan 9, Darag 4, Ferrer 3, Ren 2, Ibanez 2, Sembrano 1.

Scoring by quarters: 22-24, 42-41, 62-65, 87-85.

Second Game

RNV Construction 73 – Ocampo 20, Villacrusis 17, Taroya 8, Villamel 8, Vargas 6, Dait 4, Malonzo 2, Casau 2, Roldan 2, Zapanta 2.

Royal Pacific 55 – J. Tabora 21, Roma 11, Fundador 10,

A. Tabora 4, Lazatin 4, Cadan 2, Daya 2.

Scoring by quarters: 27-15, 38-34, 57-46, 73-55.

Third Game

Vizion Insurance 93 – Rueda 33, Pastrana 24, Bungabong 14, Regaton 8, Daseo 6, Capuyon 4, Ramos 3, Baul 2.

Supertech 80 – Daluyen 26, Tibayan 13, Ege 12, Carag 11, Santos 9, Estores 6, Sulabo 2, Agulto 2.

Scoring by quarters: 28-18, 45-37, 72-59, 95-80.



Staley leads S. Carolina over UConn for second NCAA title
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'2022 Gold's Gym Challenge' starts on April 16

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Kwon is top teen of Bridge Capital Tennis Classic

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As expected No. 1 seed David Kwon won the boys 16-and-under division of the Bridge Capital Tennis Classic last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Because the three-day tournament sponsored by Bridge Capital LLC and organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association didn't have action in the singles 18-and-under age group, Kwon installed himself as technically the top teen of the tournament. Albeit, teenagers Jimin Woo and Hye Jin Elliot won the men's and women's singles, respectively, the week prior.

Kwon made quick work of No. 3 seed Cody Shimizu in the finals, 6-1, 6-0. The 15-year-old freshman at Mount Carmel School said winning his age group in the Bridge Capital Tennis Classic is a great springboard for an upcoming tournament in neighboring Guam.

"I believe this tournament meant a lot to me because this is the last tournament be-

fore the Chamorro Open at Guam. I dedicate the victory to coach Jeff [Race], who has been coaching me since the beginning of my tennis career," he said.

Asked what worked for him during the tournament en route to the boys 16-and-under championship, "I just put the ball in that was my key," was Kwon's reply.

In the girls 14-and-under division, top seed Irin Chung overwhelmed second seed Hoo Wang in the championship round, 7-5, 6-2.

"It was a tough match but I really enjoyed playing. I want to dedicate the win to myself and my family," said the 14-year-old eighth grader from

Saipan International School.

Chung said despite the straight sets win, she had to dig deep to complete the victory.

"It gets tougher every time I play her. Few were really long [rallies] and it was really, really hot," she said.

In the boys 14-and-under division, No. 1 seed Henry Choi was tested by No. 2 seed Siwoo Lee in the finals but ultimately won, 6-2, 7-5.

Ian Chae also gave justice to his No. 1 ranking by besting No. 2 seed Ryan Choi in the finals of the boys 12-and-under division after a marathon 6-4, 3-6, 10-4 match.

In the girls 12-and-under division, Lina Tsukagoshi got

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MARK RABAGO
David Kwon serves to Cody Shimizu during their boys 16-and-under division championship game in the Bridge Capital Tennis Classic last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Rota welcomes triathlon hosting for 2022 Mini Games



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Triathlon Association of the CNMI president Manny Sitchon, Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta, Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig, Rota Municipal Council chair Jonavan Lizama, and TRAC secretary general Ricky Castro after their meeting last December following an ocular inspection of the triathlon site for this year's Mini Games.

By MARK RABAGO
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Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig welcomes his island's hosting and describes bringing the triathlon event of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 to the southern-most part of the Commonwealth as historic and makes the quadrennial event truly a CNMI-wide activity.

"The Municipality of Rota and her people proudly welcome our fellow brothers and sisters from all over Oceania with over 2,000 athletes, coaches, officials, and their families. Our people are deep-

ly humbled as the Municipality of Rota will have a role in this historic event carrying the mantle of legacy like many of our fellow Oceania participating countries before us," he said.

Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee chair Marco Peter thanked Atalig for opening his island for the Mini Games that the CNMI will host for the very first time ever.

"The recent statement from Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig pledging Rota's support and excitement to play a role in the Mini Games, has me beaming with pride. I am honored to call the NMI home. The hospitality and national pride of the NMI people are the tenets that embody the very spirit of the Mini Games. The Mini Games is the perfect opportunity for our NMI people to share our culture and open our homes to visiting countries and learn about their different cultures and customs, all while bonding over athleticism and competition," he said.

The former lawmaker said with 73 days to go before the Mini Games, set from June 17-25, he's counting on everyone in the CNMI to pitch in for a successful hosting of the 11th staging of the Games.

"As preparations are under way for the Mini Games, the NMI people have demonstrated that they are 'One Marianas,' pulling together to host

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670 Gravity wins back-to-back in open division

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Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

670 Gravity wasn't fooling around last week as they won back-to-back games in the open division of the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League at the Gillette

On April Fool's last Friday, 670 Gravity nipped Marianas Dental Clinic, 87-85, in the opener. League leading scorer Jo-

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MARK RABAGO

670 Gravity's Joseph Torres, seen here in a file photo, scored 29 points against Marianas Dental Center in their open division of the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League last Friday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

